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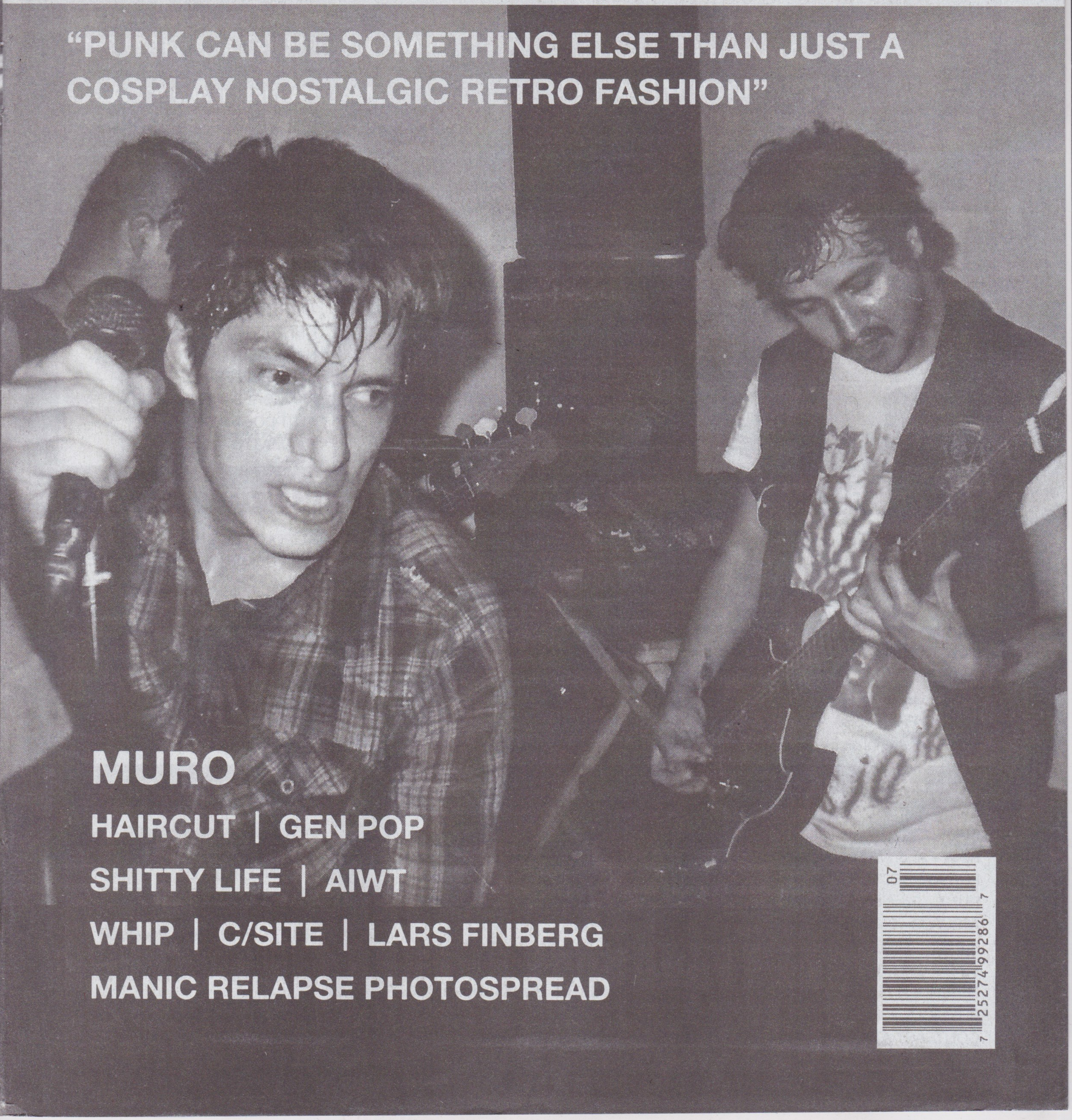

"PUNK CAN BE SOMETHING ELSE THAN JUST A COSPLAY NOSTALGIC RETRO FASHION"

MURO

HAIRCUT | GEN POP

SHITTY LIFE | AIWT

WHIP | C/SITE | LARS FINBERG

MANIC RELAPSE PHOTOSPREAD

Maximum Rocknroll is a monthly magazine, continuously published since 1982. All work is donated and no one receives any salary. All proceeds are either invested in technological improvments or go to other similarly minded not-for-profit projects. Anyone is welcome to reprint anything from **MRR**, but only if it is not-for-profit.

Send records, demos, zines, and letters to PO Box 460760 San Francisco, CA 94146-0760

Send interviews, articles, scene reports, photos, and ads to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

Call us on the phone between 10AM and 10PM PST at (415) 923-9814.

More information at our website: maximumrocknroll.com

TOP TENS

Some of our contributors' top ten (or so) things we've reviewed this month. For review consideration, send two copies of vinyl, or one copy of CD-only or demo releases to our PO Box. We review independent punk, garage, and hardcore releases—no major labels!

MATT BADENHOP

ABSURDO – EP
RIÑA – Aqui No Eres Nadie EP
WASTED LIVES – Wirehead EP
THE STIFFS – Fuck You EP
CROSTA – Un Nou Ritual EP
HONEYMOON – Trostlos LP
FAUX DEPART – LP
ALAMBRES – Alambres EP
ANTI-DOGMATIKSS – LP
RAAMATTU – demo

HEATHER BLOTTO

OBEDIENCIA – Erosión LP
EVENING STANDARDS – tape
GIANT HAYSTACKS – tape
MABS – live
NO/YA – live
CAVE CURSE – Future Dust LP
SATÉLITE – LP
CRVL – Sombras LP
MYSTIC PRIESTESS – live
FCKR – Rattenblick EP

MITCH CARDWELL

BAD TIMES – LP
NOCTURNAL PROJECTIONS – both
LIP / NAG – split EP
F.U.K. – Road Kill 45
TIM AND THE BOYS – Growing LP
ARNDALES – Shops LP
RIÑA – Aqui No Eres Nadie EP
X__X – live
RAYS – live
RUBY KARINTO – LP

ROBERT COLLINS

FLIPOUT.A.A – live
RADIUM GRRRLS – Pro Choice EP
SIAL – 12"
CASUAL HEX – LP
FAST ASLEEP – live
KARPATOS – Dead Punk 12"
RIÑA – Aqui No Eres Nadie EP
PSICO GALERA – EP
THESE BASTARDS – live
CRIMINAL CODE – 2534 LP
FAUX DEPART – LP

JOAN DETORO

SIAL – 12"
RIÑA – Aqui No Eres Nadie EP
PRIVATE SECTOR – EP
RUNT – Positions of Power LP
ABSURDO – Democràcia Assassina EP
S.P.I.C. – Policía EP
PSICO GALERA – EP
LEBENDEN TOTEN – live
PHYSIQUE – live
CONTRAST ATTITUDE – live

MIRANDA FISHER

BAD TIMES – LP
PRIVATE SECTOR – EP
LIP / NAG – split EP
RUNT – Positions of Power LP
SIAL – 12"
RIÑA – Aqui No Eres Nadie EP
F.U.K. – Road Kill 45
TIM AND THE BOYS – Growing LP
THE VACANT LOT – The Ark LP
TROUBLE BOYS – My Own Way 45

LAYLA GIBBON

ALAMBRES – Alambres EP
BAD TIMES – LP
THE INSERTS – LP
RIÑA – Aqui No Eres Nadie EP
RUBY KARINTO – LP
RUNT – Positions of Power LP
ΝΌΜΟΣ 751 – LP
CASUAL HEX – The Zig Zag Lady Illusion LP
DARK BLUE – Fight to Love 45
SIAL – 12"

GREG HARVESTER

GIANT HAYSTACKS – tape
RUNT – Positions of Power LP
SIAL – 12"
RIÑA – Aqui No Eres Nadie EP
ABSURDO – EP
CROSTA – Un Nou Ritual EP
EVENING STANDARDS – tape
CONSTANT INSULT – tape
LEBENDEN TOTEN – live
ORDEN MUNDIAL – live

KENNY KAOS

MANIAC – Dead Dance Club LP
THE STIFFS – Fuck You EP
TROPICAL TRASH / BRUTAL BIRTHDAY – split 45
WASTED LIVES – Wirehead EP
F.U.K. – Road Kill 45
CROSTA – Un Nou Ritual EP
SUEVES – R.I.P. Clearance Event LP
TEENAGE BURRITOS – LP
TROUBLE BOYS – My Own Way 45
THE INSERTS – LP

CAROLYN KEDDY

F.U.K. – Road Kill 45
DARK BLUE– Fight to Love 45
NEO NEOS – EP
SHOPLIFTERS – Forgiver EP
THE INSERTS – LP
CASUAL HEX – LP
ARCHIE AND THE BUNKERS – EP
ARNDALES – Shops LP
BAD TIMES – LP
TIM AND THE BOYS – Growing LP
X__X – live

RAY LUJAN

DOA – Fight Back CD
EUREKA CALIFORNIA – CD
THE GUESTS – Popular Music LP
LAWSUIT MODELS – LP
LOUDMOUTH – Easy Tiger! CD
MINI MELTDOWNS – EP
NOCTURNAL PROJECTIONS – both
RED CITY RADIO – CD and live
TIM AND THE BOYS – Growing LP
ANGELIC UPSTARTS – live
BUSH TETRAS – live

MARISSA MAGIC

Break time.

ROTTEN RON READY

THE TEMPLARS – Flexi
RIÑA – Aqui No Eres Nadie EP
ABSURDO – EP
SIAL – 12"
DUKE NUKEM – LP
CONTRAST ATTITUDE – 12"
S.P.I.C. – Policía EP
NEUTRON RATS – LP
ANTI-DOGMATIKSS – LP
GAITZE – 12" EP

FRED SCHRUNK

RIÑA – Aqui No Eres Nadie EP
RUNT – Positions of Power LP
S.P.I.C. – Policía EP
FAUX DEPART – LP
OBEDIENCIA – Erosión LP
BAD TIMES – LP
CRIMINAL CODE – 2534 LP
LIP / NAG – split EP
PSICO GALERA – EP
PRIVATE SECTOR – EP

SHITWORKERS: Juliana Almeida, Grace Ambrose, Lydia Athanasopoulou, Judy Bals, Michelle Barnhardt, Tyler Birch, Justin Briggs, Kuya Burd, Jon Carnes, Rob Coons, Mark Dober, John Downing, Caleb Fisher, Oliver Fisher, Jonathan Floyd, Dan Goetz, Ryann Griffin, Dan Gudgel, Oscar Gutierrez, Michelle Hill, Allen Hsieh, Jesska Hughes, Frank LeClair, Yumi Lee, Legs, Mike Leslie, Hal MacLean, Megan March, Ricky Martyr, Jenna McClelland, Pirouz Mehmandoost, Golnar Nikpour, Erich Olsen, Raquel Openiano, Donnie Palmer, Mimi Pfahler, Matt Reynolds, Andres Ruiz, Brian Schumacher, Dale Smith, Martin Sorrondeguy, Dana Watchorn, Thera Webb, Wormhole

REVIEWERS: Paul Argent, Peter Avery, Mike Battleaxe, Daniel Becker, Brace Belden, Heather Blotto, Graham Booth, Julia Booz, Mitch Cardwell, Josh Carman, Robert Collins, Yvie Deller, Layla Gibbon, Greg Harvester, Ryan Hertel, Chris Hubbard, Griffin Jones, Ramsey Kanaan, Kenny Kaos, Joshua Kay, Legs, Mike Leslie, Ray Lujan, Allan McNaughton, Ryan Modee, Gina Murrell, Sean Nieves-Quiñones, Ben Paulsen, Colin Peden, Langford Poh, Rotten Ron Ready, Camylle Reynolds, Jason Ryan, Fred Schrunk, Ramy Silvan, Alex Turner

COLUMNISTS: Neve Be, Bryony Beynon, Blow Blood, Imogen Binnie, Michael De Toffoli, Erika Elizabeth, Felix Havoc, Mette Helms, Lefty Hooligan, Carolyn Keddy, Robin Licker, Nataly Loveless, John No, Al Quint, Nicky Reynolds, Alex Sjoberg, Andrew Underwood, Viktor Vargyai

This is a contributor-driven magazine. We need help writing reviews, editing, doing layouts, processing mail, maintaining our archive, and more.

Wanna be a shitworker? Write mrr@maximumrocknroll.com.

CONTENT COORDINATORS
Joan DeToro, Miranda Fisher

DISTRO COORDINATOR
Vicky Cassis

ARCHIVE COORDINATOR
Shivaun Watchorn

WEB COORDINATOR
Paul Curran. Bryony Beynon

RADIO COORDINATOR
Brandi Howell, Sam Robinson

BOOKS COORDINATOR
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BELGIUM
Wangedrag
wangedragpunk@gmail.com
wangedrag.be

CROATIA
Doomtown
Mate Lovraka 17/1
Zagreb 10040
doomtownrec@gmail.com
livinginadoomtown.blogspot.com

CZECH REPUBLIC
Phobia
mirek@phobiarecords.net
phobiarecords.net

FRANCE
Crapoulet Records
@ Lollipop Records Store
Firminhac
Rue Jean de Berhardy 39A
Marseille 13001
cool@crapoulet.fr
crapoulet.fr

FINLAND
Teen Wolf
Fleminginkatu 11
00530 Helsinki
teenwolfrecords.com

GERMANY
Kink Records
ralf@kink-records.de
kink-records.de

Static Shock Musik
Burknerstr. 6
Berlin 12047
staticshock@web.de
staticshockmusik.com

Ruin Nation Records
PO Box 10 58 24
28058 Bremen
info@ruinnation.org
ruinnation.org

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Félsziget Klubház
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revolution.bummer@gmail.com

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40139 Bologna
koppadsr@yahoo.it
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crucialattack.nl

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Black Mamba
info@blackmamba.pt

SPAIN
Cintes Podrides
c/o Hector Garcia Lorente
PO Box 24042
Barcelona 8080
cintespodrides@gmail.com

Angel Fresnillo
Avenida de Ulia 5 6º1ZQ
20110 Trintxerpe Gipuzcoa
ajaulop@gmail.com

La Negra
Calle de Eugenio Salazar, 9
Madrid 28002
lanegrashop.es

SWEDEN
Push My Buttons
savage@ebox.trinet.se

Flyktsoda Fanzine
Gamla Tuvevägen 11A
41724 Göteborg

SWITZERLAND
Rinderherz Records
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CH-2501 Biel/Bienne
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UNITED KINGDOM
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BRAZIL
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Apto 171B
05416-000 Sao Paulo
xpedrocarvalhox@gmail.com

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Rua Doutor Samuel Porto 271
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Saude – 04054-010 Sao Paulo
ugra.press@gmail.com

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faithvoidshop.com

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Ciudad de Mexico
carcomarecords@gmail.com

Ojo de Tigre
Hidalgo 1170 Centro,
Gomez Palacio, Durango
ojodetigrebar@gmail.com

INDONESIA
Hardcore Hell
Pasar Santa
Ground Floor 180
Jakarta

PHILIPPINES
Mutilated Noise
Makati City, Philippines
mutilatednoisedistro@gmail.com

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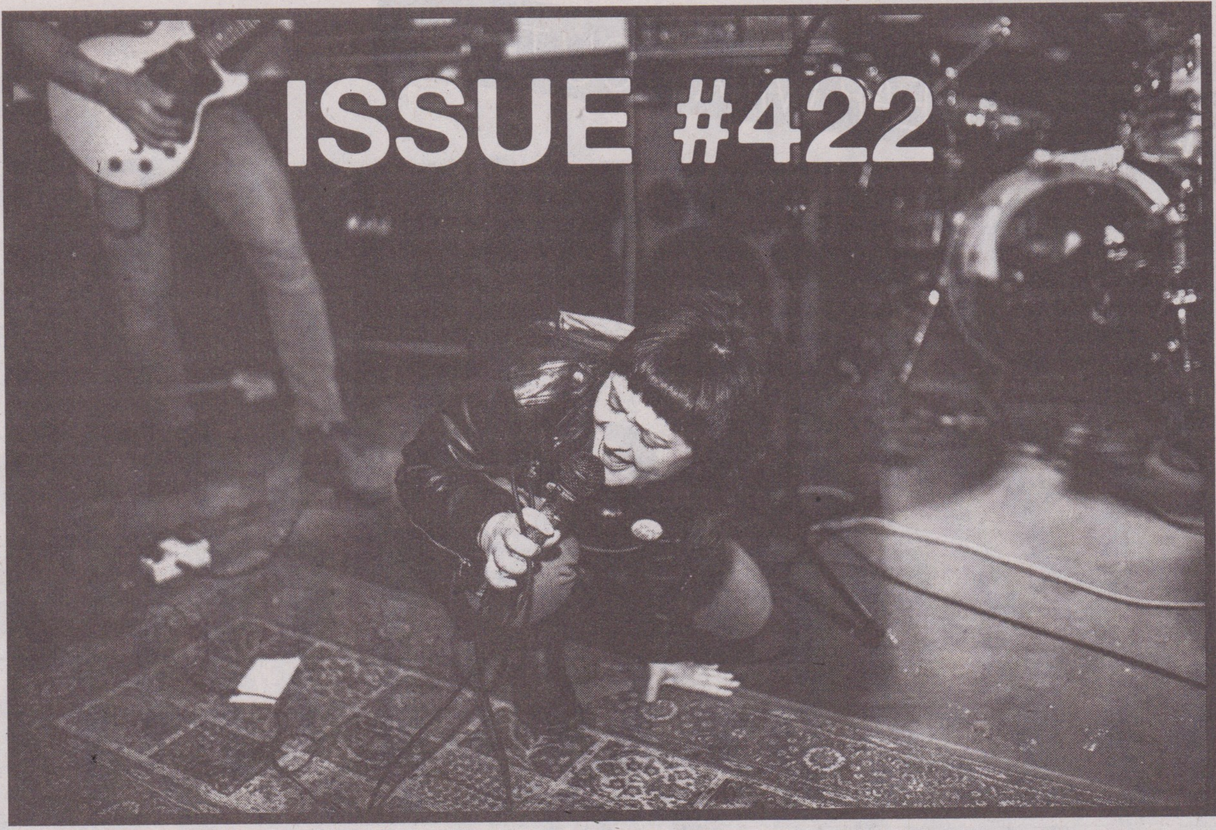

Whip. Photo by Dwayne Larson

We finally found the right candidate for the Distro Coordinator position. We are excited to announce that Vicky Cassis, who you may already know from her band rexmanningday, is here and has already been a great help! We are excited to work with her.

FRONT COVER: Muro by Juan B. Cano. Design by Michelle Hill.

REAR COVER: Contrast Attitude by Rob Coons

CONTRIBUTORS: Brian B, Juan B. Cano, Rob Coons, Ciski, Erik J. Egenes, Michele Guerrini, Jake Gulliver, Timo Huntler, Dave Hyde, Megan Koester, Alex Kress, Dwayne Larson, Raria Mad, Mezuza, Lloyd Mongo, Kentaro Murai, Elisa Piatti, Pulce Panino, Laura Rewucki, Farrah Skeiky, Martin Sorrondeguy, Carlota Vesga, Samantha Wendel

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We will not accept ads from major labels or bands with exclusive distribution through major-owned distros. Information about advertising can be found at maximumrocknroll.com/ads.

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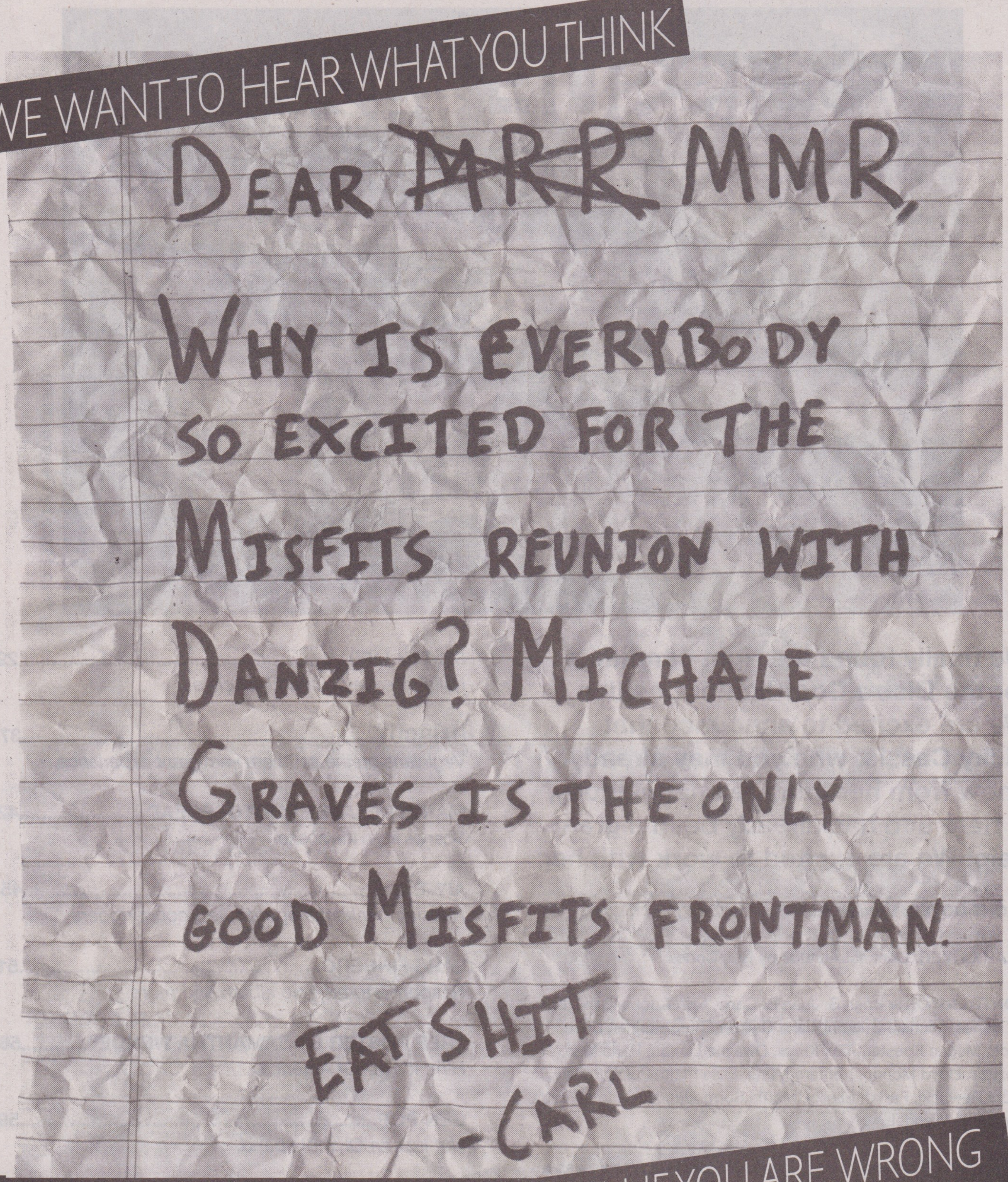
WE WANT TO HEAR WHAT YOU THINK



DEAR ~~MRR~~ MMR,

WHY IS EVERYBODY SO EXCITED FOR THE MISFITS REUNION WITH DANZIG? MICHALE GRAVES IS THE ONLY GOOD MISFITS FRONTMAN.

EAT SHIT
-CARL

...EVEN IF YOU ARE WRONG

Send your letters to
MAXIMUM ROCKNROLL
PO BOX 460760
San Francisco, CA 94146-0760

Email us at
mrr@maximumrocknroll.com

LETTERS

Send letters to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA or to mrr@maximumrocknroll.com. Letters may be edited for length. Response not guaranteed.

Dear *Maximum Rocknroll,*

I was very happy to see your announcement that you will no longer be reviewing bands that use streaming media. Some people might accuse you of intolerance or purism, but if you don't advocate for your position, who will? It's not like you are restricting what others might do. I wonder if when someone complains about a person or group advocating for a position if they aren't exhibiting repressive tolerance.

Streaming services have some pretty problematic ramifications for media ecologies. It seems to me that this creates a very monopolistic situation. The streaming services control the distribution and exhibition of media. In the case of video streaming (like Netflix) they also control the production. (I'm not sure if any of the music streaming services are involved in production). This is called vertical integration and media historians considered it a terrible situation when it was the standard for the film industry.

The amount of data gathered through any sort of internet media is terrible as well. Who even knows how much information we are giving away about ourselves? Corporations routinely collaborate with government (one might even argue they are the same thing).

One thing I wonder is how successful you can be with the venture. I noticed that many of the bands you interviewed in this issue use Bandcamp. Well, best of luck nevertheless.

Jason Rodgers
PO Box 10894
Albany, NY 12201

Hi Jason,

Every year Maximum Rocknroll *runs at least one April Fools' joke in our April issue. Some ones that caused quite a furor include the all-Christian issue and the recent call-out of chorus pedal aficionados in punk. This one in particular stems from a conversation with Dan Goetz about when he heard that* MRR *was boycotting any bands that were on MySpace. Both the April Fools' joke about MySpace and the one about streaming media are extremely believable because many people think of* MRR *as the rule-makers of punk. After all, people to this day are still divided by Tim Yohannan's decision to not review major label releases in the '90s, when* MRR *was oversaturated with submissions by major label bands posing as punk releases.*

This era of MRR *is well known for its criticism of major label practices as well as for the intense schism it caused in both the magazine and punk as a whole. The former is perhaps best exemplified in Steve Albini's classic piece "The Problem With Music," which was published in issue #133, the same issue with a picture of a person with a gun in their mouth that reads "major labels / some of your friends are already this fucked." The stance that* MRR *took, and still holds, was that the major labels were detrimental to the DIY and anti-authoritarian nature of punk To this day people such as Larry Livermore and others view* MRR *as too rigid in its ideas about what we will and will not review, which led to the creation of zines such as* Punk Planet *in response.*

I wanted to update this joke for the contemporary age, when many people in the broader population (unfortunately) do not care about the difference between major labels and independents. To build upon Maximum Rocknroll*'s reputation as a bunch of puritanical punks, I wanted to make a statement that would be believable and that would play on people's ideas about* MRR*. When Dan Goetz described the fictional MySpace boycott, I immediately recalled a series of articles by Liz Pelly that were critical of Spotify. Spotify is one of the leading streaming services in America, and much of American music consumption is now directly tied to streaming and downloads, so it makes sense that someone would do investigative criticism into them. In one of these pieces (called "The Problem With Muzak"), Pelly describes the efforts of Spotify to control the listener's experience through playlists, which many people prefer to use instead of listening to a full album. These playlists are often created for certain moods or genres, often ones that are "chill." Pelly describes the way that access to playlists is highly controlled. Indeed, very few truly independent artists appear on these playlists. So important is access to these playlists that all of the Big Three major music distributors have liaisons to Spotify to help ensure their artists get prime placement in these playlists. But when independent artists do get placed on well-known playlists, it is often without the consent of the artist. Pelly uses the example of Deerhoof being included in a Nike playlist, which was a complete surprise to the band. She refers to this process as the "automation of selling out."*

This ties into many of the criticisms that Liz Pelly has of Spotify. I was hoping to include an interview in one of the issues immediately after the April Fool's joke to explain this more thoroughly. (Maybe it'll still happen!) But the sum of the matter here is that what she calls "the automation of selling out" is part of a bigger mechanism that is shunning independent artists and record labels in exchange for a total corporate monopoly. Pelly details this further in both "The Problem With Muzak" and another piece entitled "The Secret Lives Of Playlists," which make clear connections between Spotify's money-making schemes and the big brands / corporations. I won't summarize her research thoroughly because I believe that readers of Maximum Rocknroll *who are still interested in combating corporate control in music should read Pelly's pieces to totally understand her criticisms. I'll leave this quote here from an anonymous independent label owner that Pelly cites in order to whet your appetite:*

"The more vanilla the release, the better it works for Spotify. If it's challenging music? It leaves artists behind. If Spotify is just feeding easy music to everybody, where does the art form go? Is anybody going to be able to push boundaries and break through to a wide audience anymore?"

I disagree about the necessity of breaking through to a broader audience; however, the Spotify-orchestrated playlist system does serve as a way to homogenize listener tastes and inarguably is fighting to stifle independent music. Again, I don't want to rehash Liz Pelly's arguments because I believe that punks should read Pelly's pieces.

Back to the April Fools' joke. While talking to Dan about the old boycott of Myspace, I knew then and there that streaming media such as Spotify would be the most believable target for MRR*'s wrath, since*

they and their playlist system control a great deal of how people now interact with music. But to really affect punks, especially punks who already view MRR *negatively, I needed to make the boycott page inaccurate by including Bandcamp, a website that is not a streaming music company. Without Bandcamp, the joke simply wouldn't work. Bandcamp is one of several services where anyone can share their music for free. How many punks upload their music elsewhere besides there and YouTube? Probably very few. Thus,* MRR *would once again be seen by both readers and non-readers alike (or at least the ones who didn't notice how the boycott was effective starting April 1st, 2018) as authoritarian, better-than-thou types. But this joke also plays on some punks' perception of the mag as an institution with wrong beliefs. These people rolled their eyes, shared it with their friends, and complained. Some got the joke immediately. But there weren't that many people who agreed with our "stance."*

Former MRR *columnist and* HeartattaCk *zinester Kent McClard had a reaction that I most strongly agreed with. He said "Sadly, this is only a joke. The truth is that corporate control of our lives is more real than ever. The fact that this is a joke really just illustrates that tolerance for corporate control is at an all time high." He's right—just look at the ways people absolutely rely on things like Facebook in order to arrange their gigs and organize protests. But I digress. While I am always interested in critiques of the way that corporations have had increasing success in dominating our lives, I wanted to focus on a smaller section of that control—music consumption online. My real goal with this April Fools' joke was to start a discussion with punks about the different ways that people's experience with music are increasingly channelled through just a few ways of experiencing media, almost all of which are through Spotify, YouTube, Apple, Amazon, and, yep, Bandcamp. The April Fool's joke isn't about* what *media people purchase, but* how *people experience music now, and* what that means.

I wrote this April Fools' joke looking for responses just like yours, and I am writing this response to you in hopes that Maximum Rocknroll *will hear from more punks throughout the world to talk about the ways that services like Spotify or whatever directly influence them, their music, the way that they consume media and discover new artists, et cetera. We need increasing awareness and criticism of the ways that independent artists and labels are being increasingly exploited and co-opted for corporate gain. And we need this criticism to be something beyond the commonly shared trope of "there's no ethical consumption under capitalism," which, while true, all too easily leads people to apathy. Please write in!*

—Joan DeToro

Dear Ryan,

Thank you for the review of the Pepper Kings' debut full-length CD, although I would like to point out the whole point of Native American mocking war whoops in the song "Casinos Mean Jobs" is to expose the racism in the character's point of view. It's certainly not to *be* racist! To expose his racism is also the reason why that character sings "We killed the Indians and took their corn, tried to make this land like they'd never been born!" "Casino jobs save the economy, I'm so pleased I voted for Mitt Romney." Etc.

Regarding the war whoop, you wrote in your review; "I can't fucking believe that made it onto the disc. Y'all ain't got no friends to tell you about how that shit's stupid?" Yes, of course racism is stupid. That's precisely the main point of this song. Not only is this awful character singing all these praises of gambling and the milieu surrounding casinos, he's never even questioned the inherent racism about WHY it is this country presumes the only value the Native American tribal peoples have to offer him in our society is to entertain him in his vices.

He thinks it's so the white people don't have to sully and soil themselves by doing it, right? "It's the only thing they're good for," from his perspective. "We killed the Indians and took their corn, but the hotel room offers porn! I guess that means they really do forgive us! Hurry, don't want to miss the shuttle bus!" He even takes it so far as to be 100% flagrantly clueless about the racism of that so-called "Indian" war-chant, and he chants it, both boastfully and gleefully. I sincerely feel there is no more hard-hitting, nor effective way, to express precisely how stupid that sort of character is, than by hitting the audience over the head with the blatant stupidity of his chant. It's my deliberate intent to and shove all that American ugliness and grotesque racism right back in the audience's faces. And I am truly quite saddened you missed the point.

I suspect it might be because you admittedly wrote in your review that you actually skipped through the song. It seems as if you just heard the chant, and were disgusted, and then immediately shut down and stopped listening with an open mind, to at least try absorb the deeper meaning that I wanted to convey.

I feel this is a song that's lyrically inspired by the the tradition of "Kill The Poor." Just like Jello didn't *personally* mean all that stuff about how *"Life's a dream with you, Miss Lilly White,"* I'm not racist. either. I am making a political statement *about* racism, and my staunch opposition to these kinds of attitudes.

Thank you for your time.

Tony
Pepper Kings

Dear Tony and the Pepper Kings:

Thanks for writing in. I appreciate it. Your letter didn't seem childish or pissy, even after a bad review, so I'll try to be just as respectful in my reply.

Nobody here has called you racist. I do, however, think the chant you used for this song was incredibly insensitive, and maybe even pretty stupid. If I thought for a second that the CD y'all made was intentionally racist, I would have just thrown it away, and maybe fucked with you on your social media or prank called you and shit. I didn't, though. I listened to as much of it as I could (I don't have the disc any longer, but the online version of the song we're talking about is well over four and a half minutes), read all the goofy lyrics, and admired the goofy artwork.

I don't think I missed the point at all. From the get-go, it was quite obvious that the lyrics of the song were meant to be from the view of a biased narrator, and I get that. That doesn't in any way give you the green light to use a mock Indian war cry (and if you want to hear me get nit picky, this mock war cry was used before any lyrics, before your audience had any chance to distinguish that this had any "deeper meaning"). If you think that any person outside of your circle of friends that hears this song is going to immediately (or even eventually) come to the conclusion that this mock war cry you sing is just the lyricist trying to show us how ugly American racism is, then you have made a pretty large error in judgment, and that's OK. I was really just shocked that nobody came up to you at a show, none of your partners or drunken buddies, no trolls on YouTube, no engineers at the studio, none of your parents and not one of your goddamn kids ever said "Hey, Pepper Kings, what's up with that fucked up casino song y'all do?" And if they did, did you really just shrug it off, and maybe tell them that it's cool, that the lyrics were written in the tradition of Jello and the gang's "Kill The Poor," and that they have just missed the point or didn't pay close enough attention? At the time I wrote the review, I remember thinking, "Dear, sweet Jeebus! Either their friends are calling them out and they don't care, or they just don't have any friends!"

You know, when the rest of the world doesn't get your joke, maybe you told it wrong.

Take care, and thanks again for writing.
—Rymodee

COLUMNS

So, it's been a few months since my last transmission, but a handful of excellent recent releases and the passing of the most recent Manic Relapse fest have occasioned the need for a new broadcast. Let us start with the fest while my totally not booze-saturated memories are still relatively fresh...

To be perfectly honest, I bought a ticket simply because the Saturday night show offered LEBENDEN TOTEN and CONTRAST ATTITUDE on the same bill, and I would pay any amount I could to see those bands on the same night. Predictably, they were my personal favorite performances of the entire fest. LEBENDEN TOTEN, coming off a European tour and the release of their masterpiece LP *Mind Parasites*, were absolutely everything one could have hoped for. It was strange to see a band that I've previously only experienced in basements (and once at Gilman, to be fair) command a stage the size of the main stage at the Metro performing for hundreds and hundreds of people, but that's the space that they've earned, and goddamn did they hold every one of those hundreds in the palms of their hands throughout the set. An unfortunate technical difficulty (broken bass drum head) robbed us of a few songs of the set, but otherwise it was incredible, with the band performing songs from all parts of their incredibly deep catalog, including some moments where guitarist Frank used clever effects to simulate organ sounds to replicate moments from the newer recordings. Unbelievably tight, with a self-effacing charisma that few bands could pull off while still remaining compelling. CONTRAST ATTITUDE were their polar opposites in that regard, as they were aggressively engaging throughout their set that threatened to go on long into the night despite the pleadings of the fest's organizers. I can't remember the last band I saw that were so clearly happy to be performing, every member a whirlwind of movement, constantly engaging their audience. That audience responded in kind, showering the band with love for their excellent performance and showering each other with some extremely reckless dives off the PA that probably shouldn't have happened (c'mon punx, can we at least try not to send each other to the hospital for the sake of a few seconds of glory?). For all their very blatant tribute that CONTRAST ATTITUDE pay to DISCHARGE and DISCLOSE, not least because they are such a high-energy cyclone of fun in their performance. D-beat doesn't always have to be grim and po-faced to be an effective style, that's for damn sure. Not saying that DISCLOSE weren't fun live either, but while their performances (at least the ones I got to witness) were driven by aggression, CONTRAST ATTITUDE were practically a party band by comparison.

Along with those two top bands there were, of course, a number of other standouts over the course of two days of killer bands. Primary in my mind are LA MISMA, who put on an absolutely captivating performance thanks in large part to their singer's incredible charisma. Of course the band were tight as hell, the entire set was goddamn hypnotic, especially given that the band had travel issues and barely made it to the gig at all! Those of you on the East Coast should be thankful for what you have, I'd kill to see this band on a regular basis. The reunited DESTRUCKTIONS were another very pleasant surprise. I'll admit that when they came onstage with visible notes about how the songs were played I was extremely apprehensive, but it was a super fun set. It helps that the tracks off of *Vox Populi* are some of the strongest in the entire Finnish hardcore canon, but to their credit the band delivered them with tons of energy and a dash of don't-give-a-fuck attitude (viz the drummer and bass player chain-smoking throughout the set, venue rules be damned). Dallas' OBSTRUCTION offered up a killer set of Japanese hardcore influenced material that was delivered with a ton of intensity, so much so that there were a few transcendent moments where I closed my eyes and would have sworn that I was seeing DEATH SIDE circa 1990 or so. There really isn't greater praise I can offer to a band in the style than that. Columbia's PRIMER REGIMEN were the great new discovery of the fest for me, offering up an extremely arresting performance of melodic Oi! / punk. Every song was extremely well-written and delivered with conviction. I don't have a good enough grounding in the style to really compare them to other bands in the style, but I know that this band is particular is one I'd love to hear more from. PHYSIQUE, whose debut 12" I just got to review, confirmed my suspicion that they are a fucking great live band by laying waste to the Metro with maybe the best Friday set, totally crushing crasher / D-beat delivered at a furious pace. All go, no slow for sure. Portland's PETITE played an early set of super well-written Oi!-touched punk with killer vocals and a rhythm section to die for (seriously, if I were to start a band I'd steal their drummer and bass player away if I could!), with some powerful songs about surviving / survivors of sexual assault that closed the set. Finally, yet early on, Oakland's own DESOS PRIMITIVOS made the most of their early Friday slot by delivering maybe the best set of any local band on the fest with their energetic take on Spanish / Mexican punk, driven by melodic riffs and extremely strong vocals. Also, not that this is an afterthought so much as a given, NEEDLES were fucking great. But then, NEEDLES are always great. Still, Martin and company deserve a shout out for being on hiatus for so long and absolutely killing it.

If there's a negative take-away from the whole fest, it's this: this was a remarkably apolitical affair. I understand the fatigue that comes from living in the Trump era in the US, and I don't want to downplay the statements that some bands did make onstage, but it did feel at times that this fest was an exercise in fashion and style more than it was a scream of rage against the status quo. In these times more than ever in my lifetime (and I lived through the Reagan administration!) it feels like resistance to the system is a futile effort, but it's in these times that we need to energize each other the most. Of course angry stage raps aren't going to topple the forces that are arrayed against justice, but I can't help but notice that there was a remarkable lack of effort over all on that front. It's so easy

to feel helpless to change the course of the country / world these days, I feel that as much as anyone, but it doesn't hurt to at least try. I hope that in 2018 punk is more than just noize, that we can try to reach each other and help bolster our resolve to resist the corruption and cruelty that we see all around us every day.

So that was the fest, let's talk about some killer new releases! First out of a handful of great new stuff is the RADIOACTIVE demo CD-R. Tempting as it is to ignore the "ex-members of..." list for most releases, this band joins a member of '90s crasher-crust pioneers DECEIVING SOCIETY with members of second generation bands like DROPEND, ABILITY and KAFKA, creating a dynamic that's worth referencing and exploring. The sound does not rely on distortion beyond what is expected for an energetic hardcore band, relying instead on tough, articulate vocals and razor-sharp riffs, augmented by gang backing vocals and an incredibly tight rhythm section. Seriously, the interplay between the drums and bass is shockingly tight, always note perfect regardless of the tempo or style that the guitar and vocal are attempting, and those dudes cover a lot of ground on this eight song demo. These songs cover the gamut from gnarly crust attacks to clean, speedy traditional Japanese hardcore style to moments of all-out-attacking Brit-core style. There's a disappointing lack of SORE THROAT influence given all the nods to that band offered up in the artwork, but that's hardly a reason not to recommend this recording. It's already been available as a cassette for a while, it seems like this CD-R is going to be kept in print as long as necessary to meet demand, and, fuck, it might as well be a first album by a band that's got their identity and sound dialed in already. (Distort Noise)

Mexico's HAIBOKU are a fuckin' special band indeed, offering up an amazing take on mid-to-late '80s Japanese thrash punk *á la* CHICKEN BOWELS, DEADLESS MUSS and GOOGOLPLEX filtered through an intentionally rough recording and a shitload of attitude. Honestly, from top to bottom, as a recording it's a huge success, from the crazed leads to the just barely keeping up drums to the shocking, authentic, throat-y, tough vocals. Holy fuck, y'all, if you're not fist-pumping and thrashing to the the denouement of "Sueño Pendejo," you're probably suffering from dead ear. The whole EP is great, but that song is just...super great. That being said, I'm not sleeping on the A-side, where the band thrash out three songs in about as many minutes, all of which are fucking killer, especially the side ending "La Peligrosa." There aren't a ton of these EPs available and they've been out for a while, so if you're lucky enough to find one, don't get scared off by the sub-par cover art; the Selfish Records-style back cover is tip off enough that this is a keeper. (Cintas Robachicos / Estaria Chido Poder Voler / Rock SVB Discos)

Hey, do you like British punk bands made up of total fuckin' glue-huffing, scrumpy-swilling wasters that you've probably never even heard before? Here's your new favorite band! Following in the distinguished (?) footsteps of shit-core UK stalwarts like SKUMDRIBBLURZ, SORE THROAT, and SEATS OF PISS, THIEVING BASTARDZZZ make a bunch of racket that you could probably identify as punk if you wanted to. It's definitely dumb enough to be punk, it's overwhelmingly fun enough to be punk, mistakes included in the recording and all. My goodness, it's the worst fucking thing I've ever heard, and it's so fucking great. Even better is the fact that this EP was compiled off a rehearsal recording dropped into the label's lap with no song titles or any other supplemental information to speak of. THIEVING BASTARDZZZ are truly the inheritors of the shit-punk crown, as their incredible levels of not-giving-a-single-fuck will attest. Are these the final farts of a patient dying of colorectal cancer or the best moment in UKHC since the SKUMDRIBBLURZ slapped a handful of change out of a promoter's hand in outrage that anyone would pay for such a bunch of noise? It's up to you to decide. (SPHC)

Japan's ZIKADE offered up their latest demo tape (the second) in late 2017, and it deserves a mention in the pages of this mag, late pass and all. This is fully-formed heavy crust in the vein of S.D.S. and EFFIGY, with a thick recording and several super-catchy metallic riffs in the mix. If DISTURD stripped out all of their ANTISECT worship parts, that would be a fair approximation of ZIKADE. Just heavy riffs, vicious vocals, and minimalist stench-core. ZIKADE are still a young band by Japanese standards, it'll be awhile before they have a chance to appear on vinyl or CD but all in all this is a killer demo and I can't wait to hear a proper full-length recording! (ZIKADE self-released)

Hey, here's a thing to get fucking unreasonably excited about: CERKKYU's demo tape! Those who have been keeping track know that South Korea have a fucking killer punk scene right now (eternal shoutout to SCUMRAID for being just the best band) but goddamn to CERKKYU take that reputation and run with it. This is fucking vicious, equal parts raw punk and unhinged hardcore in the style of 9 SHOCKS TERROR and STRAIGHTJACKET NATION, driven by the venomous shouted vocals and rocked-out riffing, grounded by rock solid D-beats under the wild leads. Goddamnit, this is a complete recording and it's absolutely remarkable for a so-called "demo." It could easily have been an EP or even the first half of a killer LP. Sadly few punks remember the Korean band S.A.G.A.L., but take it from me, CERKKYU are just as impactful, just without the TOTALITÄR influence. The level of aggression and the tightness of the playing is just the same. (CERKKYU self-released)

That's it for now (and the foreseeable future). I hope you all take care of yourselves and each other in the interim, and that you check out at least one or two of these bands if you haven't heard them! Pro-Trump rants, death threats, and offers of free beer can be sent to agunderwood@gmail.com or c/o Maximumrocknroll to the address contained herein.

SEX WORK IS REAL WORK

Naked to Heal

Languidly striding one foot in front of the other, I defeat the parking lot step-by-step. Silently, I wonder if anyone guesses that, underneath the slouchy tennis shoes, my toenails sparkle like crushed sapphires. Anxiety builds as I reach the door; a blast of cold air washes over me; my nipples harden. The woodsy dust smell of the dingy club soothes nerves from spilling over.

Head down, I make my way to the dressing room. I didn't show up for my scheduled stage dance yesterday—instead, I called a new friend to babysit me at the club and then I bolted. Stripping does good for my anxiety, but it doesn't cure it.

The dressing room is cold and metallic, like any generic locker room. I keep my gaze glued to the floor. Debilitating anxiety prevents any acknowledgement of other humans, though I secretly wish "double F" girl was there. Last night I was brave enough to compliment her nose. She's the only girl I've ever seen with tits bigger than mine. *"Fuck, I need to get motivated."* I reluctantly push daydreaming aside, eschewing the dawdling that racks up high club fees. Indulging my ADD isn't an option when strippers pay out the ass to work. "Independent contractor" is just a fancy term for "give us money if you want to parade around in your g-string."

I breathe out, releasing the death grip on my bright cherry stripper bag, splaying it open to find what I need. It takes a whole 30 seconds of lingerie fishing before a man inevitably stomps in to ruin my night.

"You don't work here anymore."

It hits me like concrete. I'm shattered, though my nature remains stalwart and apologetic. This must be a manager and, since I bounced before my shift, I deserve this. I thank him for informing me. I'm kind, I'm understanding. It sets him off.

"We saw you leaving the club with a man. We don't tolerate whores here."

Whore? Utter confusion and embarrassment rush in to engulf me. I am 25 and have never opened my legs to a man. My cheeks suffuse with the deep blush of mortification. I try desperately to find my words but can only plead the irony of the situation.

"I'm a virgin."

The manager gets what he wants, he had flustered me. I storm out seething with indignation. Full service sex work isn't undignified, but I wasn't a liar. His utter contempt for me cut to the bone.

Until that moment, sex work had showered me with invaluable gifts. Sex work had given me confidence, self-actualization, wisdom. It was sex work that granted me the ability to see myself as beautiful and capable. Sex work comforted the abused little girl in me through the practice of asserting control and boundaries. Since sex work had only yielded positive experiences, it was bruising to stumble upon my first rotten apple. A misogynistic manager and a shitty experience isn't something any girl wants a mushy taste of.

It was inevitable for me to stew, so I did, hunkered down in my car accepting the shame. Like any woman who has had her womanhood used against her, I felt unnerving violation. Like any woman who experiences violation from male vagary, I sought other women.

Seeking feminine comfort led to a late-night logging-on session in a predominately far-left feminist space. I chose a forum I knew and started eagerly perusing the threads. I reveled in the messages of solidarity and soaked up each encouraging push of empowerment. Spurred by an illusion of female-guarded safety, it took less than an hour to create and submit my own post. Writing under the account "StripperWhore," I relayed the entire humiliating experience, liberally punctuating my story with remorse and biting self-hatred.

Apprehensive but hopeful, I waited for the pop of bright orange notifications that represented new replies. I craved feedback. Raggedly world weary, I was desperately relying on kindred to build me anew. Looking back, I was asking too much of internet strangers, but intuitively I knew commiseration could soothe suffering in isolation. I also was, probably naively, hungering for validation and upliftment. I coveted palpable comfort from immaterial bosoms. My emotional state was a wreck. I reached the height of my melodramatic mood as I visualized myself proffering every broken piece of the whole I used to be.

My vision leapt into reality when I openly handed a gaggle of online unknowns every vulnerable part of myself. I guess I anticipated a verbal Kintsugi that would return me whole, mended. It's easy to get melodramatic when you're raw, and I was freshly raw. At least my emotional theatrics were short lived, the silly concept I'd dreamt up of matriarchal protection faded away while the live butchering began.

"This is the risk you take working at a strip club for people like that! What did you think would happen?"

Every successive response drove me down deeper. I had finally received my replies, absent of any sympathy. I sunk. Their words hung heavy with the unsaid conviction, *"YOU DESERVED IT!"*

And... well, *did* I deserve it? Gendered slurs were slung at me by a man who was convinced I belonged to the dregs of society. Surely among sex workers this wasn't abhormal. We all know the stereotypes non-nudies foist upon us: illicit drug laden, STD-ridden, loose, abortion punch card holding, promiscuous, gold digging, whores. I sat wondering if openly sexual women deserved these things.

I shared one terse response among a sea of many, but every other "feminist" reaction to my post read similar. The entire thread played out as redundant expressions of two sides. Of those two sides, one camp stressed owning my sexuality was risky business and abuse should be expected. These feminists tacitly acknowledged my sexual agency, but outright said I should be prepared for maltreatment. Being sexual precipitated consent to whatever harm I endured. A lecherous man with an erection can grab my ass, but because I'm sexual, I have to cope alone.

At least the second side was slightly more charitable. They resisted lambasting me for my stupidity. Instead of admonishing me, I became pitied as just another victim of sex work. I was assured no woman could genuinely own their sexuality under the patriarchy. Viewed as inculpable, I became the exalted innocent, a mere victim lacking any agency. Two heads of the same snake, I saw them as invariably the same. I despised both sides. I couldn't digest that I had to accept humiliation or abuse because of my job. It didn't make sense, and I refused to accept this treatment or dismiss it.

Maybe dismissal would have been possible if the snide misogyny was articulated from the tongue of a male. That would have settled far better, at least that was familiar, but that wasn't this reality. This reality was salt in a perpetually infected wound. The vitriol lobbed at me wasn't spat by some old bible-thumping, Republican blowhard. This sentiment materialized from enlightened, far-left, radical feminists—feminist women who comically display man-hating as a badge of honor. The strongest women I didn't know, who dared to defy society with bombastic aplomb, weren't the untouchables I thought they were. Feminism wasn't the perfect system that championed my rights. In just one conversation I witnessed the epitome of radical womanhood dismantled to reveal a terrible weakness. Within feminism a malignancy grew and oozed with virulent self-hatred.

I was horrified. I never suspected smart, self-aware women could revile female sexuality just as much as male chauvinists. I was uncovering female self-hatred at a cognizant level, and it dumbfounded me. It's not that I didn't understand loathing the sexual creature inside; I personally had my own colorful history of sex aversion. I practically wasted decades abhorring fucking. I consciously distanced myself from an animalistic nature. Suppressing feral and unyielding urges became taxing; sanity had me adopt a competing second nature. Ugly, sick repulsion responded to every manifestation of warm sensual heat. Sexual distaste became outwardly praised. "I love how you aren't a slut like other women." Toxic approbation fed a sexual dormancy that lasted a quarter century. So yeah, understanding the hatred of sexual womanhood was easy when I hated mine too.

Thankfully, though, I mustered the wherewithal to trade in grotesque fantasies of DIY clitoridectomies for intimate moments of sensational, breath-taking, ecstasy. I wouldn't let my passion die. I pursued liberation. Rules weren't going to smother my sensual vitality. I ceased keeping my snatch pristine for a future husband or boyfriend. I greedily embraced essence and flesh. I fell in love with my womanly contours and dismissed self-doubt. My joy-filled journey carried me dancing all the way to a pole. I became a stripper and counted it as a feminist achievement. I thought it was a feminist achievement. But if this was a feminist achievement, why were these feminists trapped in my pre-enlightened stage of revulsion, hating me for working without pants?

I ruminated over being twice traumatized day after day. I refused to accept the notion that someone exposing their tits for cash deserved ostracism any more than a chaste wallflower. Didn't all women yearn to do what I did by realizing themselves in full? When did it become okay to abuse me? When I became a stripper? I had vanquished my internalized misogyny. I no longer held the view that female sexuality was inherently wrong. Wasn't the aim of feminism to eradicate the impending blight of gendered scorn?

Answering these questions helped me understand feminism wasn't fully healed. Just like society, there exists a segment of feminism wherine women profess to love women, but constantly fall short of this. Loving women is easy, but so is stumbling when you have to embrace the sexual (or asexual) part of womanhood. As a self-identified feminist, I understand this position. (Now called sex worker exclusive radical feminism, proponents are called SWERFs for short.) I've even shared my own toxic beliefs about my sexuality. It's damned difficult for women to own our sexuality when it's used against us, stolen from us. Society has been browbeating us for centuries with our shame. Knowing this, it's easier to fathom how the most enlightened can feel shame and dispense it. Arduous work still necessitates laborers though, healing needs to commence for women to ever be fully liberated.

Full embrasure of sexuality must include all facets; sex work cannot be excluded. Accepting a woman's sexual self becomes imperative when we realize the sex shaming paradigm is fueled by concepts steeped in misogyny. Debilitating misogyny is the root of almost all female sexual shaming. Two misogynistic principles that underlie the bulk of sexual shaming are intertwined ideas. These ideas exist separately but are also self-evident in their interdependence. These concepts are assumptions that 1) women shouldn't be in charge of their sexuality or 2) seek it selfishly.

The acceptable sexuality of womanhood only exists within the context of men, especially under male ownership. Male ownership is the force that drives fathers to protect daughters, boyfriends to hide their girlfriend's bosoms, and fiancés to expect their betrotheds have a low "number" to be marriageable. (A popular rap song quote that has practically developed into a cliché, *"You can't turn a ho into a housewife."*) The white wedding dress worn today in modern weddings pays homage to the woman's purity. Purity is a standard still upheld that encourages women to save their sexuality for their husband's ownership. Modern purity balls exemplify this male ownership of female sexuality as a young girl will pledge her virginity to her father. Her virginity then falls under his patriarchal ownership, and he must protect it. The girl / woman never owns her own sexuality. Marriage means she hands over ownership to her husband; it is now his to protect. This is why only women have a standard of modest dress imposed upon them. No one advises shirtless men to "respect themselves." Relatedly, no one asks promiscuous men, "what would your father think?!" Men are viewed as human beings expected to realize their sexuality; they are naturally thought to be sexually independent and sexually selfish.

For women, being selfish in any capacity is taboo. Combine the taboo of selfishness with the shame of sex, and the taboo ascends to appalling. Can you imagine a world where a heterosexual one night stand is defined by a woman receiving oral sex with no regard to male pleasure? It's unfathomable, yet in our society the reverse can be undisputedly true. Once the male has an orgasm, it often will mark the end to a sexual tryst.

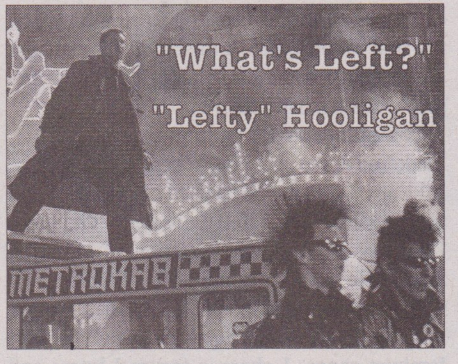
Our culture punishes sexually selfish women. Women having full agency regarding their sexuality marks the difference between the metaphorical Whore of Babylon and Mary Magdalene. One flaunts her sexuality for selfish reasons, the other is a victim with stolen agency. Ironically, that is the difference between a feminist faction accepting casual sex but not sex work. (SWERFs will fully accept sex work when they paint the workers as victims.) Casual sex and sex work may simultaneously exist for the benefit of man, but only one exists with a woman having agency on two different levels. (The second level coming from the independence that money can afford.)

It is surreal for me to realize I was doubly traumatized for the same misogynistic reasons. We're used to society battering us, but we assume our ingroups are sacred places of safety. If feminism doesn't remediate its view of sex work, women will never be able to realize their autonomy in full. It's important that all factions of womanhood are able to stand together in solidarity to assert personhood. Feminism needs to be safe for all types of women to achieve progress as a group.

Taking into account everything I've said, I don't want you to think I'm gullible enough to believe persuading the world to accept a full sexual womanhood will make all unequal things equitable. I only urge this path because I have felt, firsthand, the uncontainable power it instills. Few things compare. That's why I sit here writing this in a green polar bear stamped shirt, braless, legs squished by black velour. I'm writing this as a woman comfortable with herself. I don't worry about my partner count or my inexperience; two at 29 years old have both become neutral numbers to me. I'm now a woman who has mostly healed. I'm in a relationship that prevails without the expectation of heterosexual penetration. My boyfriend licks, nibbles, and sucks, not expecting reciprocation. A whole act doesn't require male release. He is even cool with my place on the asexual and gay spectrum. We don't keep track of our frequency and we're both okay just loving like that. He's rounded out my sexual acceptance by letting me be selfish. It makes me feel human. I'm with a partner who treats me as a human because I expect to be treated as a human. Healing my view of sex healed me, but know my own journey isn't the only journey. More must follow to achieve what the women's rights movement set out to do.

In my personal journey, radical self-acceptance was my very first step to becoming whole again. I suspect if all women practiced this it would be an invaluable act toward healing as a collective. Realize I'm aware society has an impact that loving yourself won't miraculously cure. I've heard the grievances of dastardly "choice" feminism. Radical self-acceptance isn't likely to change your life overnight, but it will bestow upon you an infallible compass. When women recognize their humanity, they realize they deserve human rights. When we all realize what we deserve, we stop settling for less than humane treatment. As I healed the relationship with myself, society must mend its relationship with female sexuality. Healing our view of sex is an integral step in improving our treatment of women.

—Nataly Loveless



Every child in public elementary school learns that, after 1492, two food staples common to the "New World" were introduced into the "Old World" via the trans-Atlantic exchange inaugurated by Columbus. I'm talking about potatoes and corn, or maize. What's not so well known is that maize was substantially indigestible, that potatoes contained low-level toxins, and that Native Americans processed both heavily in order to make them palatable. Plant breeding and hybridization techniques since 1492 have resulted in far more edible varieties of both maize and potatoes, at the cost of the diversity of the original plant populations.

Both maize and potatoes are considered species complex (superspecies, species aggregate) which, biologically, means a group of closely related species that are so similar in appearance to the point that the boundaries between them are frequently unclear. In fact, the original maize and potato superspecies

each contained hundreds, if not thousands of related individual species that could potentially hybridize. One species of maize or potato might not be able to easily cross breed with another species of maize or potato at the far range of their respective genetic spectrums, but that spectrum did allow for gradual, continuous hybridization along the way.

Now, think of the political Left and Right as separate species complex. I'm well aware of the dangers of comparing social phenomena with biological realities. The Nazis were adept at such false comparisons, for example defining Jewish people as a biological race and then attributing everything from one's physical appearance to demographic dispersal and communitarian organization to that *faux* race. I'm using species complex to describe politics not as an analogy but as a metaphor, even as that concept provocatively conveys the political fluidity that individuals within the Left and Right can demonstrate.

On the Left, Victor Serge started as a youngster sympathetic to socialism who became a radical left anarchist before joining the Bolshevik party after the Russian 1917 Revolution. Eventually Serge affiliated with left Trotskyism in opposition to Stalinism, but at every stage he remained highly critical of the Left to which he subscribed. More recently, ex-MMA fighter and anarcho-communist darling Jeff Monson became a Russian citizen and joined the Communist Party of the Russian Federation. Moving in the other direction, there is the example of Murray Bookchin. He started out as a Stalinist by virtue of his upbringing, gravitated toward Trotskyism by joining the Socialist Workers Party, and finally developed into an ardent anarchist communist whose pamphlet "Listen, Marxist!" (part of his collection of essays *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*) became a rallying cry for a whole generation of post-New Left anarchists.

Because the Left is based much more on program and ideology than the Right, political movement within the Left seems more rational. No less sectarian, mind you, but there's the unifying sense that "we're all part of the Left." In John Sayles' well-known short story "At The Anarchist Convention," when the building manager threatens to call the police to evict the Convention because they refuse to move to a smaller room, "[n]obody bickers, nobody stalls or debates or splinters." They stand together, "arms linked, the lame held up out of their wheelchairs, the deaf joining from memory [...] in 'We Shall Not Be Moved.'" However, such moments of revolutionary solidarity are short-lived, with the Bolsheviks organizing their Cheka two months after the October Revolution and the German SDP resorting to the Freikorps soon after the 1918 sailors and workers soviet revolution.

On the Right, much has been made of "The Insidious Libertarian-to-Alt-Right Pipeline" described by Matt Lewis in *The Daily Beast*. Michael Brendan Dougherty calls it "The Libertarianism-to-Fascism Pipeline" in the *National Review*, but the notion is similar. (This is a veritable four-lane freeway compared to the local road between alt-lite and alt-right.) Not only is libertarianism a unique gateway drug to neo-Nazism, there's an easy exchange between the two that is belied by their seeming ideological incompatibilities. That exchange might even be considered a conscious—if secret—strategy of the Right generally, as revealed by JP Nash in his review of Jim Goad's *Shit Magnet*: "If I had to describe my political philosophy, I would say: 'Libertarianism now, fascism later.' We need to preserve our civil liberties now in order to take them away from the morons later, when we create a healthy White society: an organic state with no parties, no elections, no demagoguery, and no politicians—a society where the best rule for the good of all—a society that takes eugenic measures to drain the Goad end of the gene pool forever—a society where the degrading filth of Judeo-Afro-Homo-Chomo-Pomo popular culture is rolled up by a giant dung beetle and plopped into the bottomless pit of oblivion."

As a revolt against modernity and thus in continuous reaction to the Left, the Right is fundamentally non-rational in its blind appeal to authority, whether that be tradition, belief, divinity, scripture, law, the state, leadership, or charisma. Whether or not the Right's authoritarian and libertarian wings are in collusion, the Right's appeal to authority is what Richard Wolin calls the seduction of unreason that disguises its schismatic nature, producing a sectarianism that often puts the Left to shame. For instance, when Martin Luther replaced the centralized authority of the papacy with the decentralizing authority of scripture, what followed was Reformation, Counter-Reformation, some ten million dead, and eventually almost 50,000 Protestant denominations. And the Right is by no means united in what constitutes proper authority.

But what about individuals who seem to jump between far Left and far Right? Returning to the original biological metaphor, what about movement not within (intra) species no matter how broadly defined, but between (inter) species? Isn't the latter much more dramatic than the former?

In my classical anarchist days, as a member of the Social Revolutionary Anarchist Federation, I was appalled by the story of "Red" Warthan who became an anarchist in response to Federal gun restrictions but turned Nazi skinhead when he was attacked and beaten up by a crowd of black kids. Perry Warthan is now in prison convicted of murdering a fellow skinhead in his gang for being a suspected police informant. Many a New Leftist turned conservative, among them David Horowitz and Ronald Radosh. A canard of the neoconservative movement is that most started as Trotskyists like Irving Kristol and Jeane Kirkpatrick. Not true, although many like Daniel Moynihan and William Bennett began politics as liberals. Today, Andrew Anglin has a similar political arc, going from being an antiracist vegan Leftist to a Holocaust-embracing, neo-Nazi alt-rightist who is currently underground evading subpoenas in a civil suit caused by his vicious trolling. Jason Kessler, one of the organizers behind the Charlottesville "Unite the Right" riot, also began political life as a Democratic supporter of Obama and a participant in Occupy Wall Street. But supposedly such is the "natural" progression of things, in a more extreme form, from the quote attributed variously to Churchill, Clemenceau, or Lloyd George that: "Any man who is not a socialist at age 20 has no heart. Any man who is still a socialist at age 40 has no head."

There are numerous individuals who've made a similar if opposite journey from Right to Left, from fascism to liberalism or the Left. Ex-skinheads Timothy Zaal, Christian Picciolini, and TJ Leyden have told stories of leaving violently racist skinhead gangs to become more tolerant, accepting, liberal, even Leftist. Much less dramatically, GOP stalwarts like Kevin Phillips, David Brock, Michael Lind, and Bruce Bartlett have proclaimed they can no longer support their former conservative agendas and have become moderate, even liberal Democrats. Karl Hess, Joan Didion, Garry Wills, and Elizabeth Warren also come to mind. All this flipping from Left to Right and *visa versa* can produce a kind of political whiplash that is disconcerting and can make anyone doubt the genuineness of such conversions.

Certainly such inter-political switchovers are sensational, far more dramatic than the slower intra-political evolution we're usually familiar with. But politics is not biology, and our metaphor is just that, a metaphor. Left and Right are not separate species incapable of crossbreeding, even as individuals are perfectly capable of politically crossing over and as movements are capable of cross-pollinating. And of sometimes creating monsters.

In a way, it's misdirected to focus on individuals and their personal reasons for changing politics. A similar caution can be made of political movements. There are social contexts and "the times" when such political conversions occur with greater frequency, specifically during spontaneous grassroots

political upheavals and more calculated instances of ideological battle. The Right likes to call those latter moments "culture wars," or even more disingenuously, "metapolitics." Mao put the lie to this succinctly when he said "politics is war without bloodshed while war is politics with bloodshed."

I'll conclude this discussion of Left / Right political conversions—whether intra or inter—next column by detailing various illustrative social contexts that enhance or inhibit such political crossovers.

PERSONAL PROPAGANDA
Personal blog: gamatiasz.wordpress.com
Political blog: leftyhooligan.wordpress.com
Website aggregator: gamatiasz.com
Publishing website: 62milepress.com
Facebook profile: facebook.com/georgematiasz
Facebook writer page: facebook.com/gamatiasz
Personal Instagram: @gamatiasz
Book Instagram: @onepercentfree

would be less likely to initiate drug use. But offering people treatment and support instead of locking them up avoids the irrevocable damage to a person's family, community, social support, job and housing prospects. Ask any homeless person who uses drugs what's the number one thing that gets in the way of their sobriety and I guarantee something like 89.6% would cite lack of housing as their number one thing. Don't actually ask people that though, it's rude.

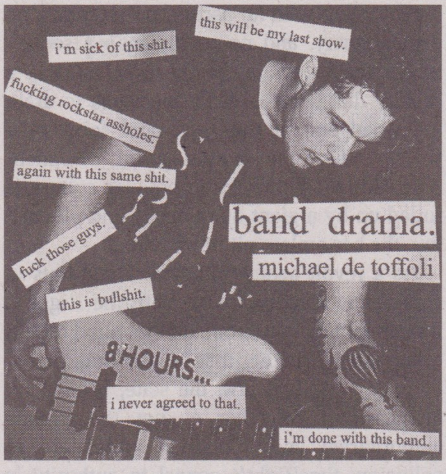
But do you know how hard it is to get a job to pay for housing with a felony, let alone a conviction? And despite non-discrimination clauses in housing laws, if you have filled out a rental application in the US, you know that they always ask "Have you ever been charged with a felony?" Up until 2016, it was not illegal to be denied housing if you had a record. Even now, appealing an eviction or denial of rental is pretty impossible for people who have no money to their name. Non-discrimination or civil rights stipulations are often irrelevant to poor people. But if the US and other countries were to do some more decriminalizing, that would eradicate much of the problems that cause people to become dependent on drugs in the first place.

There are still issues with drug policy in Portugal; it's certainly not perfect. Harm reduction activists are frustrated by stagnation. Drugs are still illegal, which means that quality and purity cannot be tested, making it significantly less safe. If heroin were legal, it would be held to the same safety standards of other prescription medications. Recent cuts to social welfare and education budgets threaten the successes of the past seventeen years. They didn't have supervised injection sites until 2017, which, who are we to talk, but in comparison these have been around for over 30 years in Europe. Drug policy experts also want to make Narcan more widely available in Portugal and to institute needle exchange programs in prisons. But all told, the situation is way better than what most of us in the rest of the world have got.

I'd like to leave you with this little nugget from the UN, which is by no means the most trailblazing or radical international body: "There is essentially no relationship between the punitiveness of a country's drug laws and its rates of drug use. Instead, drug use tends to rise and fall in line with broader cultural, social or economic trends."

One last thing: recent reports say that 20,000 citizens of the Philippines have now been murdered under Duterte's war on drugs that began just two years ago.

dearauntihazel@gmail.com



Band Drama

I think that band relationships are just as important as any romantic relationship that anyone is ever in. Your bandmates require time, attention, patience, forgiveness, stimulation, trust, and a general sense of commitment, same as a partner. There are many times when you spend more time with your bandmates than your partner and your partner will get jealous. And seriously, vice versa. They'll become a part of your life, good or bad, and if you're going to stay together all these things need to be addressed. That's what we'll talk about in this column: why bands fight, why bands work or don't work, why bands succeed, and why bands break up. What's the difference between a happy functioning band and a band that's destined to fail. So in almost every way this is kind of a relationship column, to examine the fragile relationships that you have with your bandmates.

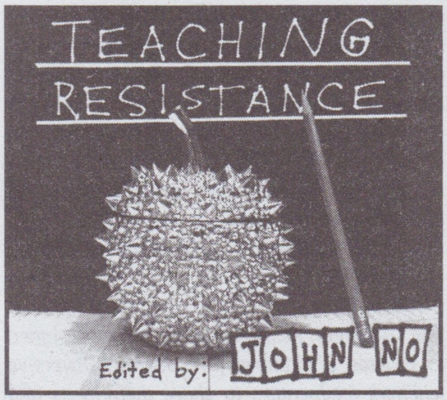
As I'm typing this, my phone is literally buzzing off the table from a band group text argument, where our drummer is officially quitting the band. Again. And with very good reason. This isn't the first time he, or any of us, has threatened this, but none of us have ever done it in person, it's always been through the group chat. Our guitarist is a "telephone tough guy," meaning that he's very confident and aggressive over text, but when we eventually get into the same room he's smiley and cool as if none of his fucking bullshit ever happened. I have literally been fired from the band more than once on my way to practice while on the train because I got out of work late, and then walked into the studio as if nothing happened. No apology, no talk, nothing, but the evidence of the incident is right there by the quiet brooding. He's a big ol' teddy bear in company, but hidden behind text he's actually extremely abusive and dark. So today he is being aggressively shitty to our drummer and cutting really deep. He knows where to go to get right under the skin with an attack that will land and get infected. As I'm typing this I want to step in and confront him, but I've learned to stay out of it over text. It's not worth it because we'll never truly be able to express ourselves when we're so disconnected and because it's so easy to be misheard with just the words on the screen alone. But I see the way that he's treating our drummer and it seriously breaks my heart, so when our drummer says that the show coming up at the end of the month will be his last, I don't blame him.

I don't talk about this very often because the answer is so obvious to so many people. The one main answer I *always* get is "you can't let him treat you all like that! You need to quit or kick him out," or especially from machismo punks I get "fuck that guy! I'd kick his fucking ass man, I don't play that shit! no way!" and it's always just that easy. The reality is that my band is a codependent relationship, where we believe that the only way for us to function is to stay quiet and weather the storm. The music that we play is complex post-rock stuff and the sound really does rely on all of us personally, so if we simply shoot him a couple of middle fingers and kick his ass out we'd really need to restructure the band completely and basically start new. When we're together we're usually fine, and when we're playing it's totally perfect. Not talking or making eye contact, just playing, then it's perfect. If we could just do that, live in a *White Album* disconnected limbo, then we'd be fine.

So yes, we all have our easy answer. Don't be a dick over text. Don't be a bully over text. Don't start fights, especially over text. If you have a problem that can't wait until the next time we're all in the same room together, address it respectfully but only say what absolutely needs to be said at that moment and close out with the promise to talk about it when we're all together. Only deal with

things civilly and in person. All too often in this digital age we default to keeping an entire relationship electronic. It's easier. You can communicate on your own terms and take more time to plan out a response. It's softer and less visceral, but it's also not human, which can make aggressive people like him inhuman. It plays against our personalities to honor this, so it's definitely going to be a huge adjustment. I'm acknowledging now that we may not be big enough people to be in a relationship like that. If we start addressing elephants in person we might discover that we actually can't control the room. But that's the only way to break out of codependent habits, which we have to do if we want to grow into something healthy. Right now my phone is face down on my desk, buzzing its way towards the ledge. It's the equivalent of hearing your parents fighting in the other room, wondering if this will be *"the fight,"* or if they'll find a way to move past this one too. Not solving any issues, just moving past old ones to live to fight again another day.

Each month this column, Band Drama, will either be reviewing a universal issue that all bands face, like side projects, flaky bandmates, scene etiquette, tips for the stresses of tour, and things of that nature, or I'll be reviewing one of your band's issues. If you'd like a fresh perspective, advice, or just to vent in general reach out to me at banddramamrr@gmail.com. I've been in a lot of bands for the past fourteen years, which means that I've been in a lot of bands that have ended. I'd like to think that I've grown from each and every one, learned from each and every incident, and taken the time to reflect on each and every failure or success. I'm also still learning and experiencing and I always will be, so I wanted to start this column so that I can share what I've learned, as well as learn from all y'all punks in bands too.



We've got some exciting news for fans of this column—the radical pedagogy and punk / hc teaching connection we explore in TEACHING RESISTANCE is about to become a book! Slated for release in Fall 2019 on the excellent PM PRESS, the book will feature expanded highlights from across the column's three years (and counting) of publication in MRR, *plus new / exclusive material from contributors, lesson plans, interviews, punk teacher playlists, and much more. In the meantime, we are always looking for more submissions from teachers and other people deeply invested in the radicalization of education. Send your ideas to teachingresistance@gmail.com!*

The last few months have seen a lot of news on the education labor front, particularly in the United States, where teachers are fighting back in new and innovative ways against a decades-long push by both major political parties and their corporate backers to disempower / deunionize educators and privatize public education. The following report and analysis, originally published on izquierda.info, is on the spontaneous, grassroots movements pushing back from within against some of the most right-wing states that have largely de-unionized their public sector and all-but-abandoned their commitment to provide equal access to quality education for all. These teacher-led movements have yielded powerful results and have the potential to transform the way labor fights back against capital and reactionary political ideology. It was written by CJ Korpaczewski, who was the guitarist for Bay Area punks SLACKBONE, and is a long-time union activist who is currently in the process of earning his teaching credential. He is also a proud member of the Left Party.

Support #RedforEd: Trailblazing Teachers Fighting the Good Fight

Across the United States, under the banner of the hashtag #RedforEd, teachers from conservative and underfunded states are blazing a path with new tactics of direct action, including self-organized workplace walkouts and creative bureaucratic workarounds that serve as an example and inspiration for labor fights coast to coast.

From West Virginia to Arizona, teachers mostly from Right-to-Work (for less) states, all of which do not call themselves members of a traditional union, are organizing school walkouts to protest legislation passed in their state legislatures that is designed to crush the public school system.

The #RedforEd hashtag and logo was created by a 47-year-old Arizona father, David Bays, whose design evokes the red used in past labor struggles as well as the fact that most of these walkouts are occurring in conservative so-called Red States.

"As a concerned parent, I obviously want my kids to have the best education they can get so they can be properly prepared for the next steps in life," said Bays. "This means we have to invest in our educators and schools." After seeing discussions on social media, Bays thought it was a good time to offer his design services—the father of two has a background in marketing and branding.

"I suggested to Noah that I wanted to help create a brand [identity] for them that could coattail off the national attention that West Virginia teachers were getting," said Bays.

While most of these teachers from Arizona, Colorado, Kentucky, Oklahoma, and West Virginia work under legal contracts that forbid them from striking against propositions from their various school boards, these teachers are stealthily weaving between the letter and the spirit of these anti-labor laws by walking off the job as a protest to recently passed anti-public school legislation.

In Kentucky, public support is coming the teacher's way in many forms, most importantly with food.

Arizona restaurants such as Great Bagel, Willie's Locally Known, Alfalfa, and more offered deals such as percentages off food and drinks and even free meals to school teachers. In the past few weeks, teachers across the state have been protesting Governor Matt Bevin's pension reform.

"Our teachers are a really important resource, so we have to pay them because they teach our kids and take care of our children every day. If we don't do that, we can't expect much from them," said Great Bagel owner Robert Swan, "we feel like we need to support our teachers and make sure that they are getting paid well and are taken care of."

This is a new and exciting tactic meant to counteract the negative optics of teachers refusing seemingly generous pay raises. What these state governments are doing is actually offering teachers sometimes substantial pay raises, but those raises are cut from their state's already dwindling general education funds.

The teachers know this will do two things: make them appear greedy for not accepting this "generous offer," and bankrupt the public schools, which will pave the way for an education privatization profiteering free-for-all. That is the most important fact that demonstrates the unselfishness of these teachers—they are fighting for one of the most basic tenets of a free and functioning society: a secular fully-functioning government-provided education system for everyone—liberty of the mind.

As is the case with almost all of these walkouts, the teachers are walking out to directly protest how the funding flows by insisting that their raises are untethered from the general education funds, and funded solely from separate parcel taxes. As we must make monumental changes to secure our public schools' future, we should act boldly

and demand a capital gains tax or other forms of progressive taxation the oligarchs have convinced us are an impossibility.

While some may be surprised that it is teachers who are pressuring the barricades and pushing labor forward, it makes perfect sense for those versed in the sociopolitical theory of uneven and combined development.

In this theory, disparate situations and conditions, whether it is inequitable levels of wealth and technology between nations or imbalances of almost any sort between social groups, creates an unstable environment that propels change forward, whether that change is negative or positive.

With teachers, they stand squarely on the precipice of change, as their higher education and societal interaction levels do not match the higher pay and respect earned by those with similar education in other industries.

This imbalance, according to the rules of uneven and combined development, requires one side to fight for what they have been historically denied—in this case, it is teachers fighting for their dignity, their students' future, and the future of public education in the United States.

According to Allegretto's most recent teacher pay study, "public school teachers' weekly wages in 2015 were 17% lower than those of comparable workers—compared to just 1.8% lower in 1994." This means that teachers are paid less than other college graduates in every state: In the US, teachers earn on average 77% of what other college graduates make. Michigan's teacher pay ratio comparison is slightly better at 82.7%.

"Despite the fact that I had secondary degrees, despite the fact that I am 38 years old, despite the fact that I do everything I can to provide for my son," states Marisol Garcia, the Vice President of the Arizona Education Association, "when we were filling out the school paperwork, my son was able to qualify for free and reduced lunch. It was the most humiliating, embarrassing moment in my life as a young, single mother"

This ever-widening income gap between workers with similarly high levels of education has created a vacuum within the mechanisms of uneven and combined development—a vacuum that, when combined with other factors like the ballooning student loan debt that comes with teacher training, will either destroy public education as we know it or thrust teachers into the labor-struggle vanguard where they lead the working-class to victorious gains—much like they do for their students in the classroom. It is beginning to look like the latter.

It is also important to note those who want a better education for their children must understand that such good education starts with good wages for teachers. There is no such thing as good schools run by poverty-stricken teachers.

Good pay also means a more stable workforce. Teachers across the United States are often forced to repeatedly move to schools in other districts or states when their low pay is coupled with the increasing cost of living. Experienced teachers are becoming a rarity as many are forced to give up education in search for a livable wage in another sector.

The duties and expectations of teachers are otherworldly; so should be the respect, pay, and support granted them.

Teachers are a rare combination of high cultural development, knowledge, intellectual studies, and harsh social responsibilities (they are after all responsible for the development of children and teens and their preparation to fit in society and the world).

A teacher's job is also psychologically taxing, as they have to deal directly with student poverty, discrimination, and racism while helping students navigate and make sense of the traumas they experience due to police abuse. Because of this, a teacher is in a unique situation, in which their intimate contact with society and its craven ills are unlike any other labor group.

Teachers also have the tools and opportunity to make a tremendous impact in society through molding their students' education in social justice, history, politics, and economics. That is, *if* they take responsibility as participants of a movement for social change and adopt a culturally-relevant curricula serving the needs of students from the working class, LGBTQIA communities, as well as students of color.

The community, including some Republicans, are also pledging support for their public school teachers. Mariaelena Sandoval brought her 11-year-old daughter and held a sign that said, "I'm a Republican, I'm voting and I'm #RedforEd." She said she had a "wake-up call" when she learned a teacher paid out of pocket for a field trip.

"I'm walking for her," Sandoval said of her daughter.

The ruling class still insists that teachers run holding tanks instead of schools, where a teacher is expected to simultaneously take a bullet for their students, teach solely from a corporate-printed textbook, work for increasingly lower wages, and endure hours without a bathroom break, all the while preaching the acceptance of bourgeois society ad preparing their students for a lifetime of labor exploitation.

On top of all of this, teachers in many districts perform many hours of unpaid labor: grading, counseling, responding to emergencies, and field trips, to name a few things—also, most spend their own money to procure elements necessary for the classroom or provide supplies for students who cannot afford them.

Meanwhile, teachers in unions make more money than those who aren't in a union. In 2015, teachers not represented by a union had a -25.5% wage gap—and the gap was 6 percentage points smaller for unionized teachers. This is why the teachers in conservative states, who lack union representation, are organizing direct action workplace walkouts via online message boards and Facebook groups. They are forcing the "professional organizations" that loosely organize them to quickly support their teachers for fear of being left in the dust by the swift action of these educators.

At one time, most US teachers were members of the American Federation of Teachers, and many still are, but an agreement with professional organizations like the National Education Association siphoned some of their membership away—much to the thrill of public school privatization profiteers.

Like with all of the walkouts by teachers mentioned earlier in this article, teachers should organize strike committees and other independently created self-ruling bodies to quickly react to adverse conditions when their union or professional organization is sitting on their hands awaiting an absentee savior within the government.

We must rally behind these beleaguered but steadfast educators by supporting their labor actions in every way. We must develop an across-the-board unwavering labor solidarity through class consciousness that transcends the dog-eat-dog dogma of the bourgeois oligarchs.

Workers in industries outside of education should watch the teachers' struggle closely, as we are witnessing a sea change of actions and tactics of a newly-awakened and invigorated labor movement, A wave of class struggle will soon crash onto the once tidy bourgeois boardrooms, and if the union bosses do not respond or reform, they will also wash away the tired artifacts of labor bureaucracy to make room for a new breed of activism and class-consciousness.

Just like in our school days, we must look to our trailblazing teachers for guidance, new tactics, and new-to-develop political and economic philosophies.

It is time to fight, and don't be late for school.

—CJ Korpaczewski

The Teaching Resistance column is designed to provide a platform for radical, subversive teachers / educators to share their ideas and draw attention to important issues around education; particularly compulsory- and community-based education. If you are a teacher (anywhere in the world) for students of primary

or secondary school ages (K-12), Community Colleges, or alternative learning arrangements such as collectivist free schools, and you want to submit an idea for a column, please write an email to teachingresistance@gmail.com —John No, Teaching Resistance editor

In the current political climate it seems like almost every month I wind up talking about George Orwell in this column. In Orwell's book *1984*, Winston Smith had the job of rewriting history. He would cut articles and photos out of the newspaper and toss them into a memory hole, where they were instantly incinerated. Since then, the term "memory hole" has come to signify the removal or elimination uncomfortable or politically dangerous historical fact. Today a lot of people seem intent on rewriting history or changing the historical narrative, casting the objectionable into the memory hole.

History can be an ugly place—the past is full of atrocity, injustice, and oppression. It can be very dicey business indeed to impose our values on those of our predecessors. Here in Minnesota there has been a campaign to change the name of Lake Calhoun to a rarely used and long forgotten Native American name: Bde Maka Ska. Many object to the views of former Vice President John C. Calhoun, for whom this lake was named. Foremost among their objections was Calhoun's support of slavery in the early 19th century. While slavery was despicable, it was in fact a cornerstone of the economy and politics in the early days of this nation. We cannot deny the fact that the ruling elite of the 18th and 19th century were mostly slave owners. Changing names of streets and lakes or tearing down statues does not alter this truth. I would argue that it's more important to use these symbols of the past to teach in the present. Instead of casting John Calhoun into the memory hole, perhaps we raise the question, why was someone with such views considered so honorable as to have a prestigious lake named for him? And let us not forget that many of John Calhoun's political theories are still popular with conservative think tanks now. Calhoun often wrote in defense of the "freedom" to own slaves needing to be protected from meddlesome regulation. The same argument used by libertarian business types today who want to be "free" to dump pollution into the river and such.

Why are there statues to confederate war heroes all over the south? If we tear them down, does it change the past? Perhaps we should be using these symbols of the racist past to understand the legacy of institutional racism in America instead of casting them into the memory hole. There is a time to tear down those statues. That time is when the revolution sweeps away the old order that produced them. This day has not yet arrived; the same system which erected these monuments rules us today, and we can better understand how we got here by backtracking the ruling elites footsteps through history.

One thing I talked about a lot in this column, since its beginning in the 1990s, was the idealism of the DIY movement in hardcore punk. When I started writing this column in the mid '90s this idealism was front and center. This magazine and other zines of the era featured in-depth and sometimes acrimonious debates about the relation between music, subculture, and capitalism. This debate seems to have almost vanished.

It might be apocryphal, but I have heard in the late '60s there were some bands coming from the same scene as the PINK FAIRIES, the DEVIANTS, and HAWKWIND that were so anarchistic that they refused to allow themselves to be recorded. These bands felt that any recording could be turned into a commodity and thereby turn their free music into a tool of capitalist profit. Therefore, said bands would only played at free festivals, which they maintained was the only appropriate format for a truly free music. Some of this hippie idealism made its way into the early punk movement, notably through CRASS records. We all remember CRASS's attempt to enforce the pricing of their records by printing a "pay no more than" price on the cover. Similarly, Dischord would print the price of their records right on the cover of the record with the motto "why pay more." This kind of thing would seem almost laughable in the age of e-commerce, but it was taken quite seriously until rather recently. I remember witnessing a heated argument between an idealistic anarcho punk and a record store clerk about the pricing of some CRASS LPs at Reckless Records in Chicago. The thought was that true artistic integrity and freedom of expression was by necessity above capitalism, and the profit motive and charging any more than just the bare costs of production was an attempt to sell out and corrupt punk ideals for personal gain.

This DIY idealism seems somewhat anachronistic to us today, but it was very much real and a part of the landscape right up to the early 2000s, when the internet took over and injected a crude commercialism into hardcore from which it will probably never recover. In those days, there was a feeling that there needed to be a strict separation between the mainstream music business and the DIY underground. DIY hardcore existed in its own separate subcultural sphere, free from interference by corporate entities where total artistic and political freedom of expression would reign. Counter to this argument was always the realist who tried to explain that records had to generate revenue to cover expenses. I remember when DESTROY played C-Squat in 1993 I set up a little table with records and t-shirts. An earnest young man got in my face and told me I could not sell anything for profit at their squat. I explained that any money made was paying for gas in our tour van, food, guitar strings, drums sticks, etc., and he relented. But this kind of thing was not uncommon in those days.

Contrast this to today, where so much music is allegedly free on the internet but is actually in the hands of major corporations such as Google, Facebook, YouTube, Spotify etc. If a popular band attempted to sell their record at "pay no more than $3," internet flippers would just buy them and cynically resell them at a profit. I've talked before about the existential crisis of DIY hardcore vinyl. At the store where I work, DIY hardcore is barely represented in the new bins. Most of what is stocked there is metal and expensive reissues. There is a bit of current underground hardcore in the 7" bin, but most of it languishes as much of the younger generation prefers bandcamp to vinyl. In contrast, the used bin, especially the used 7"s, are a monument to the DIY hardccore, crust, and pop punk scenes of the '90s and early '00s; most of these records seem like relics to a long forgotten era (like '77 or '82) and can be had for a dollar or two. As one who was deeply invested in the DIY scene of the late '80s up to today, I am a bit disoriented by the direction things have gone. Furthermore, I don't like what it says about the way things are headed. Almost no one is interested in buying vinyl releases by current bands. If a good hardcore punk band can't even justify pressing up to 200 or 300 7"s, do we just trash the idea of records completely and just go digital? If we follow this line of thinking, we might go all the way back to the anarchistic ideals of the past, where music is totally free and there's no commodification of the music. On the other hand, if we remove the record label, the records and such from the equation, do we turn the music only over to the forces of Spotify, YouTube and Bandcamp? And do we let *them* set the terms rather than the punk distributors, stores, and fanzines? If we remove the records and "merch" from

the equation and make music totally free, we eliminate the ability to recoup expenses for recording, artwork etc. Some people feel like this tilts the playing field towards bands who are privileged or have corporate sponsors. Alternately, it's been argued for years, that mediocre bands have been heavily subsidized by virtue of being on a commercial label that is able to spend heavily on marketing and promotion. However, that label has as its goal selling more records. Whereas outside entities might have other agendas, such as promoting beer, collecting data or establishing a hip cachet for their brand.

As a long term reader, I was saddened to see that all we could muster as a tribute to Tim Yo was two pages. I hope more is forthcoming.

I've been excited about *Maximum Rocknroll*'s fully searchable digital archive for a while now. Back in high school, I used to spend hours poring over Kill from the Heart (may it rest sweetly in peace) to try to find out anything about bands I had yet to discover. Back when it was just a humble NYU website, KFTH was little more than a database of band names, sometimes with record names and their corresponding *MRR*, *Slash*, *Ripper*, or *Flipside* reviews typed out. I hope that the next generation of young, asocial punks can spend as much time prowling through the *MRR* back catalogue as I spent rummaging around Kill from the Heart.

The process, I gather, has been a massive undertaking. Around the turn of the last decade, I often wondered why *Maximum* didn't have the same sort of search feature that the *Razorcake* website had. It didn't bother me too much, as I actually like buying copies of *MRR*, whereas the *Razorcake* database allowed me to forgo buying most issues of that magazine. Still, it irked me a little that *Razorcake* was doing anything better than our glorious *MRR*. After reading a little about how arduous and labor intensive it has been to digitize every magazine and record cover, I think I understand why the daunting task has taken until this summer to complete.

The upsides of this database are countless. While I don't doubt that it's primarily going to be used by narcissist musicians to look up all their own bands' reviews, it will certainly also be usable as a window into the past. Curious punks wondering what people thought of DRI in 1982 will be able to have a contemporary perspective into the band's more humble beginnings. The slang and nomenclature of the golden age, twisted by years of ridiculous misuse, will be able to be observed in its unadulterated form. For example, try using the word "thrash" today the same way that Tim and Jeff were using it in '82 (defined in issue #1 as "ultra-fast 2- or 3- chord rock with screamed vocals," but used almost indiscriminately in the early issues as a catch all for anything harder than the RAMONES). You'll get beat up, or at least branded a weekender by your town's in-punks. Kids will be able to discover the classic bands they dream of knowing. Maybe it will even help some teens skip over that awkward ANTI-FLAG phase.

But I do have some bad news for all you Yo-Yos. Tim Yohannan was not a professional writer. He was just a dude in his mid-30s who ran a radio show. Now, don't get me wrong—Tim's legacy as the greatest punk logistician is unquestionable. The magazine connected thousands of people. It allowed kids in small towns to still feel in-the-know. It allowed people from disparate countries to find and order each other's music. Everyone has fond memories of *MRR* from their youth. But few bite into some of those early issues. Very few of us have actually read anything that Tim himself wrote. He died 20 years ago, so you'd have to be nearly 35 to have any recollection of picking up a copy of *MRR* and reading something directly written by Tim without it being quoted (which would give him the editorial benefit of hindsight). Lucky for you all, when Larry Livermore called *MRR* "a lifestyle journal for retro-punks," he was talking about me. Heck, I haven't listened to anything from after 1984 since 1985. Those countless hours I spent devouring Kill from the Heart? Well, if it had a review from our founder that was good, I'd take a listen. If Yohannan hated it? I knew it was going to be gold. That goes double for Jeff Bale. Honestly, records that every punk today considers unimpeachably good occasionally got panned in this magazine—and the reverse is true as well. Together, they are two of the most enthusiastic and proactive punks that have ever lived. But their writing has occasionally aged poorly—like a beer in a clear bottle, left out in the sun. Even if you are of the right age to have read some of his stuff in its original run, you're going to find that it's going to be a little like the time you first revisited *Milo Goes to College* in your 20s—the youthful appeal has worn off some, and it's occasionally just downright gross (but hey, Tim pointed that out in his original review when he hoped the disturbing end of "these teenage insecurities will clear up after graduation").

When the archive comes up, the rosy retrospection that comes with having never actually read anything that Tim himself wrote may be a bit less pink. So, to prep you for the shock, I've done the work for you. I've found the all-time worst examples of Tim's and Jeff's writing and I'm giving it to you right here, in their very own pages. That way, we'll get the embarrassment out of the way so that there is no shock when the full archive comes up—you'll just be able to enjoy it for the beautiful, Library-of-Congress-esque piece of historical preservation that it is.

In Issue #4, Tim personally reviewed that absolutely unbelievable *Soundtrack for Trouble* EP by the Authorities. His review reads:

> Musically, this is sorta like early TSOL or BAD RELIGION, which is nothing to complain about. Lyrically, it has your basic punk themes, but there are a few lines that almost negate the sentiments because of the ignorance displayed. For example, on "Achtung," a don't-drop-the-bomb song, they say, "The Russians say they don't want war, but that's cause they're on top." They then go on to say that you can't believe anything the government says, so why do you believe that the Russians have military superiority, which most experts deny. Also, in the anti-police song ("I Hate Cops"), the line "cops are all n******" *[I added those stars, not Tim]* comes up. Huh? Then how come they're always busting and hassling blacks? Wise up, guys! A little knowledge is dangerous.

This is quite possibly my favorite cringe worthy review because it is confused on so, so many levels. Most glaringly, Tim Yo erroneously drops a racial slur—and for a magazine that points out when lyrics sheets are included, you'd expect he'd have checked and seen the line was actually, and obviously, "they're all fucking piggers." Next, that train of logic he tries to get us to follow for "Achtung" doesn't quite hold water. And even stylistically, it's a mess. He's putting song titles in both parentheses and surrounded by commas rather than having a consistent choice.

I also chuckled a good deal when I read Tim's review of BAD RELIGION's *Into the Unknown*. Claiming that the album "totally sucks unless you like slickly-produced early 70's wimp rock," he declared that he "hurled it out the window, into the unknown." Now, aside from debatably being the band's second best record, it routinely sells for over $300. The idea of a $300 bonzer slipping right out the window made me wonder what other wise investment choices Tim made in his life.

But hey, Tim wasn't the only one making mistakes around here. Just a couple of reviews away lies Jeff's review of the ARTLESS / GG ALLIN split. He calls it "a suitable mixture of retardation, one natural (GG), and one contrived (ARTLESS)." He proceeds to declare "Drink Fight and Fuck" a "classic," but that anyone who takes either band too seriously must be "dense-packed." If anything on here is a classic, it's "Bite It You Scum," Jeff, and history has proved that.

Moving on, when Jeff reviewed the BIG BOYS' *Fun, Fun, Fun*, he gave it a "qualified recommendation at best" because he thought the record was trying to capitalize on "audiences in new wave discos or something" by doing "an awful PIG BAG imitation." While I won't exactly disagree with his "PIG BAG" comparison, I will completely disagree that it was "awful." This is an absolute classic record and even every sixteen-year-old punk knows it. But what I'm really left wondering is just where are these new wave discos? That actually sounds amazing. I want to sweat it out to the BIG BOYS with a bunch of dayglo-clad power pop booger eaters.

His review of *Generic Flipper* comes off similarly, as he feels that the dichotomy between fast and slow songs makes the record difficult for any one person to enjoy. His main complaint, though, has a decidedly San Francisco twist. Jeff says that, "the hype surrounding FLIPPER has already reached nauseating proportions." That may have been true in the Bay Area, but in a debut album review, it doesn't help Joe Podunker to declare that their live shows used to be cool, but it's all smoke-and-mirrors hype now.

For Jeff, the most egregious mistake, for me at least, comes in his review of the CHILD MOLESTERS LP. Granted, he gives it a recommendation, but only because the material "is like *Plan Nice from Outer Space*—it has enormous appeal precisely because it's so awful." He goes on to call the lyrics and musicianship "the most amateur imaginable." Look inside yourself and tell me, don't the CHILD MOLESTERS serve up a couple of your favorite songs in the *Killed by Death* series, and not in a joking way? Isn't the amateurish nature of musicianship and wit in punk precisely what actually attracted us all to the genre? We all share an earnest love of the artless. That's why it's Good, Jeff. It feels strange that one of the founders of *MRR* likes punk on the level that I like county fairs: as a spectacle. It wows me that the same man can feel this way, but also pan a band like SUPER HEROINES for being pretentious and "regurgitated heavy metal." Nothing too dumb, but nothing too smart for Jeff's hi-fi.

Back to Tim: in his review of the FAITH / VOID split, which he, like a nerd, called the "FAITH and VOID LP," Tim praises VOID as a band that has "ferocious attacks" and sounds like "SOA meets LED ZEPPELIN," while slightly chiding FAITH for just being a "standard type of thrash, meat and potatoes 80s punk." You picked the wrong side, Tim. Or at least I think you did. I guess that LED ZEPPELIN comparison could really go either way, but he seems to be evoking it as a positive. Oh boy.

Now, a lot of what I find bad about some of Tim's reviews isn't when he pans a now classic record. That just doesn't actually come up all that often because Tim kind of loved all punk. Issue #1 claims that they are going to tell it like it is and not be sycophants, but mostly, telling it like it is sounds to Yohannan like this, from his DIE KREUZEN LP review from issue #15. He wrote, "This is fucking great! This is fucking great! This is fucking great! This is fucking great! This is fucking great! This is fucking great! This is fucking great! This is fucking great! This is fucking great! This is fucking great! This is fucking great!" I'm not joking. That's the review. And that record is great, but that's how Tim starts a good two-thirds of his reviews—just maybe not repeated twelve times. How does this help a kid from East Otto, Nebraska who has yet to hear *Cows and Beer* or the demo understand what might be contained on this record?

But let's not get too wrapped up in just Tim and Jeff. Some other reviewers made some choices that history has not been kind to. For example, John Silva declared that the BANGS (soon to change their name to the BANGLES) were the "best girl group since the SHANGRI-LAS." He thinks that their song, "Getting Out of Hand," which is little more than a "Ticket To Ride" rip-off, is the standout track and proves that they sound like "everything you thought that 'other' L.A. band was going to sound like but didn't." That's right. *MRR* picked the BANGLES over the GO-GO'S, belittling the latter in a thinly veiled code. What punk doesn't love the GO-GO'S? They're all original Hollywood scene punks making the very catchiest music that the post-pop genre has to offer. That said, Jeff did go on to trash both the GO-GO'S and the BANGLES a few issues later in his review of the BANGLES' *The Real World* LP by calling it "new wave pablum a la GO-GOS." At least he was almost half right, right?

But for every time that a member of the *MRR* review team got something wrong, they probably got something right ten times. And when the archive goes up, some kid who has listened to the *Incredible Shrinking Dickies* is going to go on there and search for whatever else they might have out. And what's she going to find? She's going to find the Steve Spinali review of the STUKAS OVER BEDROCK *Life Like Yogi* 7" that compares them to the DICKIES. Aside from the fact that that comparison makes absolutely no sense, Steve, it's still going to change her life. I know it changed mine.

—Nicky Reynolds

Portugal

At long last, I present you with the country of Portugal. More specifically, its drug crime policies. More specifically, the lack thereof. In 2001, the nation of 10.36 million residents became the first country to officially decriminalize drug use by scrapping the laws that ban possession. To be clear, you can still be arrested for drug distribution. The outcomes of this act have been analyzed and assessed to the Nth degree. TL;DR, the results are good. Somewhere around twenty-five other countries have since imposed some level of drug decriminalization.

Full disclosure, I have never been to Portugal so I can't attest to the conditions before or after 2001. While we're at it, I haven't been to the Philippines either. I have been to Canada, though, so please do give me some credit for writing about countries I have stepped foot in. I can't attest to what it's actually like to live in a world where communities aren't torn apart and lives aren't ruined by petty drug possession laws. I bet it feels pretty fucking good though.

It seems that things weren't looking too good for residents of Portugal or the many subjects of its colonial rule in the '70s. Or the '60s or the '50s or the '40s. To be fair, no one did too good in the '40s. In 1974, The Carnation Revolution ended the five-decade-long authoritarian regime led by Antonio de Oliveira Salazar. Throughout Salazar's reign, Portugal maintained isolationist policies that cut its people off from the outside world, just one facet of Salazar's design to keep citizens submissive and prevent an uprising.

Salazar died in '68, and his party's reign collapsed shortly thereafter. The new

government opened up economic borders, permitting things that had previously been banned, like Coca Cola. Trade prospered and people got wealthier. Much wealthier. Portugal was flush in the late '70s and early '80s. Tourism became a thing. The money was flowing, and as we all know with money comes drugs. Also with no money comes drugs. Drugs are relentless in that way.

Here come the drug-fueled '80s, and at this point, one in every ten citizens of Portugal was using heroin: 10% of the overall population were heroin users. HIV was spreading rampantly, and the country quickly earned the distinction of having the highest infection rate in the EU. It also brought with it TB, Hep C, and Hep B. People panicked. The medical community was trying everything it could, throwing up informal systems to see what would stick, despite opposition from politicians and the more genteel residents of the country. Psychiatrists, physicians. and pharmacists were siloed from one another and faced extreme opposition, sometimes even arrest, if they tried using harm reduction measures like needle exchange and methadone. The country's first Methadone clinic was vilified when it opened in 1977 and its co-founders received death threats.

Shit had hit the fan. As the problem progressed over the course of years and the dominant political discourse continued to shift to the left of what had been Salazar's Catholic regime, the people of Portugal saw a gradual shift to more progressive economic and social policies. In 1997, the government established a guaranteed minimum income program as part of sweeping social reforms. The ubiquity of the heroin problem forced the hand of government to start to directly address the issue. It was so widespread; it didn't just affect poor people anymore. People in power were now personally impacted. and so it demanded more public attention, a lot like what we are currently seeing happen in the US.

In 1993, while we in the US were still stuck in a petulant "Just Say No" stage and almost all needle exchange activity was still underground, Portugal's health ministry was instituting a national "Say NO to Used Syringes" needle exchange policy. It was supported by pharmacies across the country. And yes, the policy is literally called "Say NO to Used Syringes."

In 1998, the government created a National Council called the Commission for the National Strategy to Fight Against Drugs. The Commission was then tasked to come up with a strategy. This eleven-member commission included João Castel-Branco Goulão, a physician, champion of harm reduction from the go, and the future Chairman of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. The commission came back to the Ministry of Health in 1999 with the suggestion of full decriminalization, and in 2001 the policy was adopted. At the time, half of Portugal's prisoners were locked up on drug charges.

Decriminalization is a misleading term because drug use and possession is still illegal, it's just no longer a criminal offense. It is, however, still an administrative one. People caught with drugs get a summons to appear before the Commission for the Dissuasion of Drug Addiction, which is made up of three people: a psychiatrist, a social worker, and a lawyer. The Commission's goal is to try to get people into treatment, but they can't force it. They can issue fines and impose other administrative penalties. Drug suppliers and traffickers can still go to jail, but note: in 2000, 44% of Portugal's incarcerated population were there on drug charges, while in 2013, that number was 24%. The money saved from incarceration was diverted to provide more treatment, prevention, harm reduction, and social reintegration programs.

There are still conservative detractors who would like to go back to the old way of doing things, but the results are hard to ignore. In 2000, the HIV incidence in PWID was 1016. In 2013 it was 56—still higher than the European average, but an unequivocal success nonetheless. Hepatitis C and B rates have followed suit. Overall drug use has decreased quite a bit and, according to the UN, levels of drug use in Portugal are now lower than the European average. Between 2001-2013, drug use declined between 15-24 year-olds, the most at risk group for drug use. It's been shown in studies that fewer people start and continue to use drugs (continuation of use) than before 2001. According to death records (determined by actual physicians), there were 80 deaths due to drug use in 2001 and only 16 in 2012. Of course this number excludes cases where a person died with drugs in their body—for example, if someone had a heart attack while they had cocaine in their system, the cause of death would be deemed cardiac arrest. So you can see how both statistics have their faults.

There's also been a lot of cost savings. In addition to all the money that has been saved from jail diversion, a 2015 study found that since the law went into effect, the per capita cost of drug misuse decreased by 18-21%. The system is still struggling with the long-term costs of treating HCV, HIV, and Cirrhosis, but the majority of these cases were incurred prior to the 2001 legislation.

To put it simply, the evidence over the past seventeen years can be summed up as a big *fuck you* to conservatives who thought and still think that decriminalizing drugs causes more people to use them. This is very clearly not the case. I hope you're listening and taking notes Jim Carroll or whomever happens to be appointed national drug czar by the time this issue prints.

Some of these outcomes can be chalked up to the cultural shift and social reforms that brought about decriminalization in the first place. Theoretically, it makes sense that people who are guaranteed a living wage

Lesson 3: Quitting Isn't Punk

The air was cold but the sun was warm on the Sunday of my third voice lesson. The way in which I usually decide to do things is by impulse, which is why I try and unsubscribe from online shops when I clean out my email. I take a similar approach when it comes to scheduling things, doing it as soon as I think about it so that I don't have to worry about it until I get a calendar notification. I had scheduled my third lesson immediately after the second in order to hold myself accountable for continuing. By the time the 24-hour calendar notification hit my phone, I felt obligated to follow through with what I had told myself I would week earlier—mission accomplished. That day I arrived early, eager to get it over with, and took a nap in my car with my scarf over my eyes.

In anticipation of a third lesson, Annie asked me during the second lesson to propose a song I wanted to learn to sing. I had suggested BLINK-182 but she recommended I go with something she was familiar with as well since she'd be playing it on the piano. We found common ground in the classic rock band that spans generations—THIRD EYE BLIND's "How's it Going to Be." Annie brought a free music sheet she had found online somewhere, printed it out, and took a few moments to familiarise herself with the melody. I know all the words at this point from singing along, but it turns out trying to remember the words, tone, breathing and timing most of the words and their order were harder for me to grasp. Moving through the lesson, tired and unsure of what to do with my body, I started to wonder why I was even bothering with being here. Surely I'd be having more fun at home catching up on the latest episode of iZombie.

Apparently, the third time's the charm for

losing your interest in a new routine. At one point in the lesson, Annie, trying to understand what my motivation was, asked me what I wanted to get out of these lessons, and for the first time, I actually considered that question. Up until now, I was doing it just to do it. To prove to myself that, as I approached 27 years old, I didn't have to resign myself to an adulthood of weekends spent catching up on laundry and meal prep, that it wasn't too late to learn new things. I've never felt terrible about growing old, but the intimidation of certain things losing their window of opportunity felt real for me. When I told my friends and family about the lessons I was met with skepticism, but I was confident that this pursuit needed no underlying meaning to be genuine. But now, with the question being posed to me by a relative stranger who I had dragged into this endeavour with me, I felt self-conscious.

The best part about going to voice lessons is having a third party you don't know tell you what you're doing wrong. If you'd allow me to project my fear of intimacy across all regions of my life for a moment: maybe it's harder for me to accept criticism from those I feel closer to because learning something new requires vulnerability in a way that you have to put yourself in a position to willing be bad at something. And why would I ever want the people I care about to see me perform poorly? Voice lessons or not, they love me just the same. Interpersonal relationships come with enough navigation of criticism and support at the same time as it is that when it comes to quitting or sticking with it, it doesn't make a difference. Annie, on the other hand, is receiving compensation for her labor—her labor of listening to me sing out of tune and out of breath. And her financial stake aside, what I've come to know about her is that she has a passion for music. Up until this point, I think I subconsciously had given Annie more responsibility for carrying me through this that I should have, and if I wanted something out of the lessons it was up to me to determine what that would be.

Shortly after the third lesson, the answer to purpose started to come into clarity. Some friends of mine, both musicians and roommates, proposed the idea of hosting a cover band competition in their backyard. What better way to stay motivated than through the thrill of a challenge underscored by the fear of being embarrassed in front of my friends? My own roommates, one a talented drummer and the other knowing bass and in the process of learning guitar, were in. Here I was given the deadline needed for my internal calendar to hold a purpose in my psyche. I have no idea what it will mean to be ready the competition and am having to figure that out instead of waiting for the deadline to arrive. But the challenge of learning is the goal itself, so I'm in it.

Spring has arrived, which means it's festival season. For me, Stockholm's Dead Rhythm Fest kicked off this year's festival term. Already before the festival started, it was the internet discussion topic of this spring. And after just the first day of the three-day fest, computer keyboards were smoking and Facebook apps crashing from the fury.

What better topic than how festivals affect the punk scene to pick for this month's column for an opinionated punk festival organizer like me? Definitely worth throwing away plans for and breaking the row of columns about sound guides I'd lined up.

In the past years, the number of festivals has increased. It seems that what would be just a gig with six bands on the bill is now called a fest. At the same time, the number of big festivals with bigger, hyped, old, or otherwise well-known bands on the bill has increased, and the number of bands belonging to the "big well-known bands from a different continent" at each fest has increased too. Not that everything was better before, but change and progression comes with a price. And we're paying the price now.

I bought early bird tickets for Dead Rhythm Fest because the lineup was too good to be true (literally) and a one-off chance to see a handful of bigger bands I'd either missed before or wanted the chance to see again. For once, I wasn't going to miss out on bands because I didn't have the opportunity to travel with my friends to whichever fest had this year's hot bands on the bill. So I booked my ticket, found a cheap flight and a couch to sleep on at a good friend's place. And then one week before the bash was gonna go down, the internet exploded as it turned out the organizers were very low on funds, didn't sell as many tickets as expected, and couldn't afford to buy flights for all the bands they'd advertised on the bill.

I think the trend of flying in bigger bands for one-off shows at festivals started when low-cost airlines emerged and ticket prices, especially between Europe and the US, dropped drastically. That made it even economically possible to fly in US bands, if you're based in one of the major Western European cities where intercontinental flights are cheap. Now, it's like you're only able to stay in the punk loop if you're able to yearly travel to fests spread over the European continent because the hot, big, hyped bands are playing one-off shows there, or only touring a few dates around that. From the fests' perspectives, it makes sense to want to have a great lineup with bands on the bill that people will be excited for. So why pass the chance if you (think you) can afford to put out the cash? From the bands' perspective, it makes sense to maybe not wanna spend four weeks in a van, playing show after show with mediocre local bands, when you can get the "Europe deluxe" package and play a big festival instead. All while we all set the anti-commercialism and do-it-yourself beliefs aside and treat hyped bands like rock stars, while less-hyped bands can't get their gas money covered or a sleeping place for the same gig. Because we can swallow that in order to see those bands or put those names on our gig posters. But there's a limit to how much you can swallow, and when it all get projectile vomited up again, it's never pretty.

Individuals are not to blame for this trend. It's a good old case of supply and demand. "But that's a model used for a capitalist competitive market!" you might think. Well, this trend I'm describing is capitalism, and it's turned punk into a competitive industry rather than a community. It's an industry where multiple bands are flown in from far away to play a festival, which comes with a high(er) ticket price, rather than having a few bigger international acts and filling the rest of the spots with local bands and keeping the ticket price reasonable. The responsibility also lies with the festival-goers and punks. The trend only became a trend because here is a demand for it. A demand that a festival should have some big Japanese band and mix in a handful of hyped (not necessarily good) American bands. Because now that we've seen that we can have that in rare occasions, we want to consume that at every festival or event. It's spiked the rivalry between festivals in different cities and settings with a "what big band did X festival get compared to what Y festival had on their bill" mentality, instead of seeing the scene as a community working together.

A thing I noticed at Dead Rhythm Fest was that there were no young people. At 27, I was dragging the median age down a whole lot. And it's not that Sweden or Stockholm doesn't have any young punks—similar events and fests prove that it's quite the opposite. Festivals like this cater to a crowd of older, established punks, who can afford to buy flights, accommodation, and expensive food for a weekend on top of an expensive festival ticket. Festivals are always exclusive and

COLUMNS

elitist. But there's a limit to how financially exclusive a fest should be. This is creating a punk A-team and B-team, within the same regional scenes, and not only in terms of the more predictable and socio-economical divisions, for example geography and wealthy vs. less wealthy regions and countries.

Dead Rhythm Fest made me appreciate having a DIY-run punk venue in my city. In Copenhagen, we definitely live in a bubble. Every time I've gone to shows in mainstream clubs, the vibe has always been off—for example, barriers at punk shows and a "no stage diving" rule at a CRO-MAGS gig. As a venue technician who also has to be the venue manager most nights, I'd say that the key to a successful night is to adjust the venue to whatever gig it's hosting and the audience that'll show up. This means no barriers at underground punk shows, briefing security about what audience you're expecting, and so on. The key is to have flexible rules.

The venue security at Dead Rhythm Fest was anything but flexible. My Swedish friends were not that shocked by the security crew's behavior, but everybody else was. In some ways, Sweden is quite conservative and has a whole lot of limits and rules to be obeyed in terms of events, especially those that'll be selling alcoholic beverages. Basically, you have to hire a number of licensed security guards. This means that if you wanna have an event at a bigger venue, you'll end up having to hire security guards. Now, security guards and punks don't mix well. But the security guards at Dead Rhythm Fest were vile.

In Sweden you're not allowed into an establishment if you appear to be drunk, and you can also be thrown out for drunkenness. This is dealt with in different ways, and it's definitely also used as an excuse to deny someone entry to a place, even to deny them entry to public transportation.

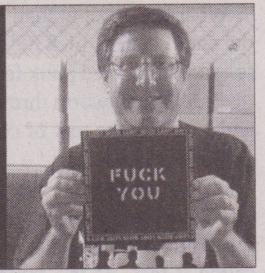
The security guards chose to deal with this by going around the club to search for anyone who appeared to be "too drunk." There's no way of measuring if someone is too drunk, so it's all based on the judgement on the security guards, and not taking, for example, medical conditions into consideration. Those who were "too drunk" were thrown / dragged out of the club in a violent way. People who'd only had drinks from the club's bar were thrown out for drunkenness. The police even showed up and arrested people for public drunkenness. The weekend was spent trying to not appear drunk and hoping the security guards wouldn't point you out.

I think this is probably the reality for many punks all over the world, and definitely in countries with governments that value personal freedom way less than what the Scandinavian governments do. It's a privilege to have access to a self-governed DIY-run punk venue, like Ungdomshuset in Copenhagen or Cyklopen in Stockholm. And that's the reason why we *all* are responsible for taking care of and supporting venues like those.

Experiences like Dead Rhythm Fest show the necessity of self-governed spaces, where punk can thrive. Support your local DIY space, and support others in protecting and creating spaces in their local towns. Experiences like Dead Rhythm Fest explain why punks fight and take huge risks to create and keep their self-governed spaces.

This column wasn't written to point fingers at any specific people or groups, but to point out trends and behaviors that we all take part in and that we're all responsible for. They say to be the change you want to see, and I hope to be doing my part to steer the scene in another direction, to make it more accessible to all and to break down hierarchies.

AL QUINT



YOU JUST CAN'T PLEASE EVERYONE

Putting one's opinions in print—or online, for that matter—occasionally leads to criticism or objections. It goes with the territory, of course, and things have only intensified in this era of social media. Such feedback moved a bit more slowly *back then*; instead of jumping online, you had to write letters to the editor. This publication used to have a very lively letters section, with people going back and forth over several issues.

The thing is, some people hang onto their resentments. I know a few people who have carried grudges over perceived slights that took place in the '80s. One of them admits he's still a dick to me because I didn't give his band enough respect back then. In fact, he crossed the line once, meddling in my personal life, but I'd rather not go into it. And all over a fucking review. Sheesh, get a life, will ya?

I've been pretty fortunate over my writing "career" to have not received all that much in the way of harsh criticism, abuse, or threats. Maybe I'm doing something right, maybe people just don't care all that much, or maybe no one has the fortitude to call me out. Either way, it has happened from time to time, starting with one of my early issues. One of my writers at the time, Kathi Whalen, did a review of a show where she said the Boston band STRANGLEHOLD "tore through a typical hardcore set that actually wasn't too bad at all, just a little on the predictable side." This apparently inspired the members of the band to call me—collect—to take issue with what she'd written, even though the criticism was mild. Of course, being an idiot, I accepted the charges. It sounded like they were a bit more than inebriated while giving me grief and asserting that Kathi's assessment of them being a typical hardcore band was far off the mark. They did have a point—after hearing their music later on, which came from more of a hard-driving melodic punk impulse, it's obvious that Kathi's review wasn't entirely accurate. She was a good writer, though, and eventually parlayed her talents into a "legit" writing career with the *Washington Post* and *City Paper*.

I got a call another time—not collect, thankfully—from a woman who objected to a review I gave of SSD's third 12", *How We Rock*. You know, the one where they "went metal." She didn't identify herself but we went back and forth for a good twenty minutes, debating the accuracy of my assessment that the album was basically second-rate AC/DC. In retrospect, that's not completely accurate, but it's still mediocre rock with incessant guitar wanking and really awful vocals. Anyway, neither of us convinced the other to change their opinion, but, while the conversation was spirited, it never devolved into nastiness. I eventually realized who it probably was some time later—someone close to the band—although she claims she doesn't recall it and / or flat-out denies it. I'm not buying it, but I won't name names.

Annoying phone calls aren't as bad as physical threats, of course. I was only threatened physically one time. There was a small group of Nazi-wannabes who came to shows in the mid '80s and would engage in sieg heiling. I called them out in the zine. The main instigator, a guy named Flea (not to be confused with the bass player from the West Coast), confronted me in the parking lot of the Channel club in Boston. He basically said bad things would happen to me if I kept saying bad things about them. I told him I wasn't going to stop and, wouldn't you know it, nothing ever came of it. I'll admit it made me nervous.

Speaking of skinheads and Nazis, one of the biggest incidents involved a skinhead zine in the early '90s called *Under Siege*. The issues the publisher sent me featured interviews with racist bands like STORMWATCH and STRAW DOGS (the UK one) and other bands who engaged with sketchiness. There was a pathological hatred of gay people and anyone who didn't embrace their nationalist right-wing ideology. Their slogan was "Burn Fags, Not Flags." One columnist who said he was a kindergarten teacher suggested that his readers

"Bash fags. Bash satanists (sic). Bash homeless winos. Bash feminists. Bash drug dealers but most of all, bash liberals! Let them know that we will not give into their pseudo-hippie ways." I could go on, but you get the idea.

Unfortunately, I published an ad for this zine in issue #32 of *Suburban Voice*, before I'd seen it. I'd been assured by an acquaintance whose band was also interviewed (a non-racist band, I might add) that there wasn't anything objectionable in it. Oh boy was I embarrassed. More than that—it made me sick. I actually sent a letter to *MRR* that was published in issue #113 (October 1992) where I offered a *mea culpa*, stating that I'd been taken and felt like a sap. I followed that up in my column in the next issue of SV. Well, needless to say, the individual behind Under Siege didn't take it too well. I made their "no thanks" list, where I was listed as "Al Queer" and the review of *SV* said it was a "fag rag." (I think I detect a trend here).

Not only that, but I got a letter from one of the zine's fans, a gentleman named Joe whose nickname, if I remember correctly, was "Animal." He was writing from a prison in New York, where he was apparently doing six to twelve years for what he said was a "bullshit" charge, namely that he "stabbed a cop like 30 times, and then his friend 20 times at a biker bar." Now I'm not saying the Animal is guilty—I wasn't there, after all—but he did send me a rather nasty missive. Yes, I keep all of my fan mail, good and bad. It was addressed to "Dickie Do aka The Traitor, Commie" and the salutation was, "Hey Al, you mother fucking commie, cock sucking..." um, I think I'll leave out the rest except to say it was two pages of every gay slur you could possibly think of. Once again, I think I detect a trend. Animal definitely had some anger management issues. I hope he was able to eventually overcome them and once again become a productive member of society.

There were two songs that had my name attached to them. One was "Al Quint Is An Emo Pussy" by TILTWHEEL and the other was "Mr. Quint" by the Connecticut thrash band ATROCITY. The former, on TILTWHEEL's *Hair Brained Scheme Addicts*, wasn't meant to be anything malicious, it was just their guitarist / vocalist Davey poking fun at me for thinking that URIAH HEEP was better than THIN LIZZY. Davey's a real diehard fan of Thin Lizzy—he has a tattoo of their logo. In recent years, I might come down on the Lizzy side of things. Maybe not—depends on the day. In any case, the lyrics don't even mention me. The entirety of them are "Wonder why I'm so depressed? Fuck the world and then I'll take you with me." People have sent me messages over the years asking for an explanation and why Davey would write a song with such a nasty title.

On the other hand, the ATROCITY song wasn't any sort of love bouquet. Nope, it was pure malevolence and a response to a negative review I gave the band when they played their first area show, at TT the Bear's in Cambridge. This was confirmed by their bass player Rich, when I contacted him on Facebook. I wrote that they had the stage presence of a "sack of potatoes."

I didn't even know about this song until the early 2010s, when Brian from DROPDEAD told me about it. It appeared on their 1988 demo *Mangled*. I tracked it down on YouTube, forty seconds of grind / thrash bile that breaks down into a riff on the "Mr. Grinch" song from Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas. Here are the lyrics: *"Quint, Quint can't you see? / Your opinion means shit to me / We don't play to please you / Take your fucking rag and screw / He's a dickhead—Mr. Quint / He's an asshole—Mr. Quint / You talk shit—Mr. Quint / You maggot Mr. Quint..."*

Anyway, Rich and I had a good laugh about it. He also said I was probably right and that they always found the review to be "funny as shit." The demo even came out on vinyl in 2016. Rich was nice enough to send me a copy and it's still available. Let's just say it falls into the unnecessary reissue category but if you can't get enough of late '80s thrash / death / grind mayhem, go to www.foadrecords.it. In all honesty, it's fairly entertaining.

I'm always open to constructive criticism, though. And I've set up a special email address for it. Share your thoughts with me at HeresADimeCallSomeoneWhoCares@gmail.com.

MORE REVIEWS TO TAKE ISSUE WITH

Berliners DIE PEST serve up four thorny tracks, each of them untitled, on their debut demo. A dark and dirty, churning and agitated sound. RUDIMENTARY PENI bumping up against INSTITUTE and also channeling some gyrating post-punk moves for the fourth and final song. Sputtering, squalling, guitar lines emitted over throbbing bass and drum patterns. A solid start. (Byllepest Distro, byllepestdistroofficial.bandcamp.com)

The two latest releases from Beach Impediment are a vinyl pressing of WITCHTRIAL's 2017 demo and the debut 7" by FETISH. WITCHTRIAL, who are from DC and include members of various hardcore bands, go for a straight-up metal sound on the four songs, the first of which has a long, ominous, intro. Coming on hard and heavy like early SLAYER and '80s era thrashers. "Hammer On The Hearse" sounds like a cross between EXODUS and some of the NWOBHM bands. Vocals range from guttural growls to banshee shrieks. You could imagine tape traders constantly swapping this demo back in the day and it might have ended up on a label like Wild Rags or one of the *Metal Massacre* compilations. Raise those devil horns high.

FETISH is a merger of people from LONG KNIFE and POISON IDEA, including Vegetable and Thee Slayer Hippy from the *War All The Time* era of PI. You can probably figure out what FETISH sound like, and they're good at it. "Take The Knife" would have fit in well on that album or *Feel The Darkness*. Three, count 'em, three guitars laying out the savage riffage and it's a full-bore speedbomb. The flip is a change-up, a rocked-up take on LOVE's "A House Is Not A Motel" with some scorching guitar trade-offs. (Beach Impediment, beachimpedimentrecords.bigcartel.com)

It's been quite awhile since SNOB's two 7"s came out—the last was in 2015—so a full-length is a pleasant surprise. This self-titled effort offers a pointed critique of sexual and power dynamics, whether in relationships, the office or encountering law enforcement. This can occur through outright hostility and physical abuse or patronization. Plenty of thump and burn in their sound, with a RUDIMENTARY PENI-inspired pulse, although the tempos are sprightlier and it's not any sort of recreation. The vocals are expressive and angry, delivered in a seething sing-speak fashion until the concluding "Ally." That song continues to build up a head of steam and then the vitriol just erupts from Fran's lungs, a formidable purge. Worth the wait. (La Vida Es Un Mus, lavidaesunmus.com)

"We make noise because noise is natures *(sic)* own politic." That's what it says on the back cover of PHYSIQUE's one-sided 12", *Punk Life Is Shit*. And noise is what you get, although it's not wrapped in an impenetrable sonic cocoon. This Olympia band dish out pulverizing fodder with the requisite DISCHARGE / DISORDER / KAAOS bent, all of it done at a fast clip, save for the pounding "Game." Reverb on the vocals and a razor-sharp musical attack. If you're going to tread such well-worn ground in 2018, you might as well do it right, and PHYSIQUE do just that. (Iron Lung, ironlungrecords.bigcartel.com)

NEUTRON RATS were around since the end of the last decade and had a number of 7"s and demos over the years, but their first 12", *Primitive Past//Nuclear Future*, comes out just when the band is breaking up. Pity, because NEUTRON RATS still sound as raging and pissed off as they did on earlier releases. A bare-knuckled, raw thrash assault with meat cleaver riffing, hoarse-as-fuck vocals, and battering-ram drumming. There are metallic guitar trills here and there, such as on "Life

Extinction." Going out with an obliterative bang. (Loud Punk, loudpunkrecords.limitedrun.com)

Al Quint, PO Box 43, Peabody, MA 01960, subvox82@gmail.com, subvox.blogspot.com, sonicoverload.net

For the past few years, Glasgow's VITAL IDLES have been crafting some of the most brilliant and shambolically off-kilter sounds at the intersection of DIY pop and post-punk and, while the move to Upset the Rhythm for their debut LP *Left Hand* has definitely afforded the group a much larger platform, they haven't strayed from the same ripped-up bricolage aesthetic of their initial 2015 demo recordings. It's a constellation of influences that includes the noisier fringes of the C86 movement (think SHOP ASSISTANTS or early PASTELS) and local concern Postcard Records, the giddy, art-damaged femme-punk anarchy of KLEENEX or the PETTICOATS, and the type of rough-and-tumble crash-pop sounds scattered across countless singles from the catalogs of Slumberland and K Records in the late '80s and early '90s. Jessica Higgin's mannered and deadpan vocals give VITAL IDLES a buttoned-up edge that tempers their more sprightly twee impulses, though, as do the trebly scrapes of guitar and sneaky post-punk basslines bending the angles in songs like "Carve a Beat," or the solemnly spartan YOUNG MARBLE GIANTS-ish chilliness that they conjure on "Solid States." Such a charming record in every way possible. (Upset the Rhythm, upsettherhythm.co.uk)

It might have only been in my own mind, but there was a moment not too long ago when it seemed like the first ELASTICA record was poised to become one of the primary shared touchstones within a certain subsection of the contemporary English punk underground. I was honestly really excited by bands like PRIMETIME who were modifying that template of angular slash-and-burn pop by trading out some of the WIRE and STRANGLERS references with nods to the likes of the AU PAIRS and DELTA 5. The new self-titled EP from London's CHILD'S POSE (featuring members of SAUNA YOUTH, WOOLF, and SARCASM, among others) fits into a similar lineage of spiky post-punk with sharp and sneering melodies, whiplash-bashed drums, and needling guitar. Each of the four songs on the 7" flies out in a lean, two-minute, burst as the vocals zig-zag wildly from coolly detached recitations to ecstatic shouts—in the midst of a rush, those clipped cries to *"leave it all behind! / and reject, reject, reject!"* in "Feral" are textbook Slampt Records, if only PUSSYCAT TRASH or GOLDEN STARLET had reached ELASTICA levels of rock stardom in 1995. Limited to 250 copies and international mailorder can be a drag, so don't snooze on it. (Nervous Energy, nervousenergyrecords.bandcamp.com)

BLUES LAWYER are a new Oakland supergroup featuring members of the WORLD, MALL WALK, PREENING, and probably about half a dozen other bands in the tangled web of the Bay Area underground. Their debut LP *Guess Work* borrows from the nervous and tense jangle of the FEELIES, the subtly melancholic hooks of Flying Nun's Dunedin faction, and perhaps most of all, the scrappy and lovelorn guy / gal harmonies of the VASELINES, all while grappling with the realities of daily life and romance in a modern world where hyper-connectivity only seems to result in greater alienation from one another. The stuttering stop-start lilt of "Unstable" give way to a crystalline pure pop chorus (*"don't judge me, I won't judge you / I know you're unstable, too"*) that's almost breezy enough to mask the darkness of the sentiment behind those words, and "Charity Case" slowly builds up into a *Crazy Rhythms*-descended frenzy as Rob I. Miller and Elyse Schrock repeat the line *"I had to guess my way to the truth"* with the sort of raw, exasperated intensity that should immediately strike a nerve with anyone who has ever been ghosted or gaslit. A perfect and tightly-wound bummer-pop soundtrack for sulking indoors this summer. (Emotional Response, emotional-response-recs.bandcamp.com)

Parisian quartet ROSE MERCIE have been drawing comparisons to a very disparate spectrum of female-centered post-punk groups, and like almost every modern band who has been likened to the RAINCOATS or the SLITS or any number of other women who put out a 45 on Rough Trade between 1979 and 1982, the connection is really one of function over form. All four members of ROSE MERCIE take turns their instruments (guitar, drums, synths) and share vocal duties—on their self-titled debut LP, their voices often collide into GRASS WIDOW-ish spectral, intertwining, harmonies. The clattering percussion is sparse and deliberate, the guitar is picked out in twangy single-note rhythms, and warm washes of keyboard drone quietly in the background, with the negative space between each part being emphasized just as much as what is actually being played. "How Can I Talk" and "Floating" are mournfully dramatic pop slow burners, tracing the shadows left behind by ELECTRELANE, and when things get a little more sharp-angled and raucous (but never too raucous), like on "In the Valley" or "Moyen Age," ROSE MERCIE hopscotch across the sort of prickly, minimalist patterns that similarly-minded projects like TRASH KIT, BENT, and MOSS LIME have all adapted from their late '70s / early '80s forebears in the last few years. Quietly bewitching and beautifully ramshackle. (SDZ / Jelodanti / Monofonus Press, rosemerciemonofonus.bandcamp.com)

One of my friends in St. Louis tipped me off to his current favorite local group PINEAPPLE RNR and described them as "PYLON meets No Wave," which are four words guaranteed to get my attention. To be honest, I didn't really hear the PYLON angle on their five-song demo, but PINEAPPLE RNR definitely fit in with the current crop of Midwestern art-punks putting a smudgy DIY spin on some of the more obscuro / oddball American new wave sounds of the early '80s. The vocals are delivered SU TISSUE-style in an affectless yelp, there's skronky sax blurts and piercing shrieks from one of those gym teacher whistles, the rhythms are frantic and herky-jerky, and it's all blisteringly danceable in a strobe-lit basement discotheque sort of way. MIKA MIKO would be a really apt parallel, if their interest in thrashy first-gen West Coast punk had been eclipsed by a DEVO devotion, or maybe the WORLD covering the entirety of the *Red Snerts* compilation. There's apparently a single coming out on Lumpy Records later this summer that should be equally flipped-out and wonderful. (pineapplernr.bandcamp.com)

Say hey at ripitupstartagain@gmail.com, more sights and sounds at futuresandpasts.org.

To play or not to play?

One of the perks of exchanging opinions and discussing points of view within our scene is that

generally we tend to agree with one another in principle. But when it comes to tactics of how to act upon those shared principles we sometimes seem to find ourselves on opposite sides of the spectrum. The Israel / Palestine conflict is a perfect example of that. When it comes to the BDS movement (Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions) and specifically the cultural boycott, general opinion in our scene seems to be divided. Possibly because when directly interacting with fellow punk rockers in Israel we easily tend to blur the lines between the rationale of the cultural boycott and the emotional response to our like-minded Israeli brothers and sisters proposing a gig for us over there.

One thing I hope I still have in common with most of my fellow punk rockers on either side of the cultural boycott argument is that as a DIY punk band I will never judge you on your decision to either play there or not to play there. Ultimately we both share the same views about the conflict, we just disagree on tactics.

Usually the first reason why some punk rockers feel it's justified to play a gig in Israel is to support the local dissident punk rock scene there who are just as opposed to their country's apartheid regime and just as opposed to Israel's illegal occupation of the West Bank and East Jerusalem and the medieval style siege of the Gaza strip as we are. In their eyes, the cultural boycott does not apply to punk rock gigs as the crowd they will be playing for are allies who share the same views about the conflict as they do. I know that because almost every time the subject comes up in conversation with an Israeli friend she / he fully understands my point of view and respects our decision to politely decline their gig requests to play within Israel's borders over the years. Of course, occasionally there are some who refuse to understand, let alone respect, that decision. Heated and emotionally charged exchanges would occasionally result in an attempt to smear us as being anti-semitic and / or racist over something we decided *not* to do.

I am not anti-Israeli, I am merely against Israel's regime and their treatment of the native Palestinian population. I am more than happy to play a punk gig for our likeminded Israeli brothers and sisters, just not within Israel's borders. The fact still remains that Israelis actually enjoy the right to free movement in, out, and all across the country, as opposed to the vast majority of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, aka the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza, a fact often ignored by the mainstream media.

The second reason why some punk rockers feel it's justified to play a gig in Israel would usually be something along the lines of hoping to get their message across to anyone who might not share their views on the conflict. Perhaps making those people rethink their position and see things from a different perspective. Unfortunately, this tactic hasn't made any difference over the last 50 years, and personally I doubt it will over the next 50. In a way, continuing to try and justify this tactic after 50 years of no luck only strengthens the case for the continuation of the BDS tactic after only 12 years and several successful results of major international companies relocating out of the country and exiting the Israeli market, famous musicians and movie stars refusing to perform there, and colleges and universities across the globe voting in favor of divesting from companies that do business in Israel.

Just how much of a threat Israel regards BDS to be becomes clear when you look at the enormous amount of dollars it invests in trying to counter the movement through lobbying groups in foreign countries like AIPAC (American Israel Public Affairs Committee). AIPAC is responsible for bringing about anti-BDS laws in nearly half of American states, barring companies that engage in boycott, divestment, and sanctions against Israel from receiving government contracts. They are also behind the so called "Israel Anti-Boycott Act," (congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/720) which criminalizes any US citizen "engaged in interstate or foreign commerce" who supports a boycott of Israeli goods and services. Anyone guilty of violating the prohibitions will face a minimum civil penalty of $250,000 and a maximum criminal penalty of $1 million and 20 years in prison, effectively making it a felony.

Of course, this act is in direct violation of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution, but nevertheless it's already being supported by 45 senators.

Laws like these resulted in the victims of Hurricane Harvey who were hoping to receive aid to relaunch their lives from a relief grant offered by the city of Dickinson near Houston in Texas having to first promise not to boycott Israel by signing a four page document. AIPAC is one of the biggest foreign influential lobbying groups in the United States, but I guess as long as they aren't Russian, it's all fine, right?

Perhaps a third reason why some punk rockers would agree to playing a gig in Israel would be the holiday aspect of it. Israel has some great beaches, delicious food, lots of historical sites to see, and depending on where you live their weather is much better than at home. When it comes to the big bands, money could also play a role in their decision to play there, but of course I wouldn't know. If these are your reasons for not supporting the cultural boycott then obviously we do not share the same principles to begin with.

One unique aspect of the BDS movement is that it was called for and started by Palestinian civil society. By choosing to ignore this call, you are essentially saying you know what's best for Palestinians better than Palestinians do themselves. For me personally I see this as the picket line you just do not cross. This is also why I will not go down the "whataboutism" road as every single injustice in the world requires its own unique way of fighting it. With regards to the Israel / Palestine conflict, I believe the most effective way of putting pressure on Israel as well as keeping the discussion alive is through BDS.

I recognize the state of Israel just as I recognize Palestine, although I strongly disagree with the means by which Israel was created. I respect international law, and so should Israel if it wants to be a state rather than a rogue state. I definitely do not, however, recognize Israel as the democracy it claims to be. Israel is an ethnocracy. The so called "birthright" legislation offers anyone from any part of the world with at least one parent of Jewish descent a free ten-day trip to Israel in the hope that they would consider immigrating. This would instantly grant them full Israeli citizenship whilst simultaneously over 5 million UN classed Palestinian refugees are to this day being denied the right of return to the homes they were expelled from by Zionist militias and the Israeli army when the state of Israel was created. Their right of return is a principle guaranteed under international law (UN resolution 194).

Personally, if I had been born in Israel as an Israeli citizen, I would emigrate and thereby do the exact opposite of what the Israeli state wants me to do. That would be my way of protesting against its policies whilst simultaneously supporting the BDS movement. And in case it matters to you, I have emigrated from the country I was born and raised in, although that had nothing to do with politics at the time. Of course I would never judge anyone born in Israel on their decision to either stay there or not (unless they live in an illegal settlement), just as I would never judge any punk band on their decision to either play there or not. This is a point worth making when being criticized for refusing to play a gig within Israel's borders for our like-minded punk rock brothers and sisters.

I am more than happy to agree to disagree on tactics whilst sharing identical points of view on the conflict, but by trying to attack a punk band for refusing to play in Israel you are essentially trying to force your tactics on them whilst totally disrespecting theirs.

With an illegal military occupation (violating UN resolution 242) by a foreign army lasting half a century and counting, the prospect of any positive outcome from so called "peace negotiations" is next to nothing. When using the pre-1967 "green line" border as a starting point, Israel has never ever proposed any concessions in said "negotiations." They've

only ever proposed to annex less of the Occupied Palestinian Territories and East Jerusalem than they had originally planned for. The USA is blatantly acting as a biased but supposedly "neutral" broker vetoing UN resolution after UN resolution whilst ever increasing their annual military aid budget and unconditionally supporting Israeli war crimes, of which of course the most recent one is the shooting and killing of dozens of unarmed civilian protesters in Gaza. Meanwhile, the creation and expansion of illegal settlements in the Occupied Palestinian Territories continues with a total disregard for international law breaking the 4th Geneva Convention of 1949, which prohibits countries from moving population into territories occupied in a war.

In my opinion, the only effective, nonviolent way of putting pressure on Israel with any hope of bringing about change is to join the BDS movement and to keep the discussion alive regardless of most of the media's cover up of the facts. Just as the South African apartheid regime fell, so will the Israeli apartheid regime. It's just a matter of time, and when it does I will be first in line to play a gig there.

Vive La Resistance!

—Robin Licker (the Restarts)

Women and butches

1. I want to sincerely apologize for including that someone had pitched an Israeli scene report to us. At first, I was open to considering running that scene report, if only because I believe that there must be punks in Israel who are actively combating against Israel's colonialist practices against Palestinians. I do not support the government of Israel, and find their treatment towards the Palestinian people to be truly reprehensible. I support the people of Palestine as they fight for their homes and their basic human rights which Israel has taken from them.

I will not consider running the Israeli scene report anymore because I realized that doing so would be in violation of the BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) movement, which I support. For anyone who is unfamiliar with BDS, which is led by Palestinians, their website (bdsmovement.net) contains the original text (and translations in English, Arabic, Spanish, French, Italian, German, and Hebrew) as well as further explanations behind the movement. In this case, an Israeli scene report, even if it were featuring bands that were actively pro-Palestinian, would be a violation of the boycott that Palestinians have called for, which is part of the non-violent sanctions the Palestinians are using to combat Israel. I believe it would be a violation because any big feature on an Israeli artist serves as a promotion, which may in turn lead to increased money going to Israel in the form of merch sales or more concerts. To clarify: this does not mean we will refuse to review releases by Israeli bands or to run news-type pieces about the work of anti-Zionist Israeli activists, because these have a considerably smaller likelihood of funnelling money to Israel. If this confuses you, please read up about the BDS movement on their website if you haven't already done so.

I would like to thank those people who have talked with me about this for their guidance and their understanding.

2. On a related note, Miranda, Nicole Verto (our columns coordinator) and I have complaints about two of the columns we have issues with this month. *Maximum Rocknroll* has run plenty of columns (and let's be real here, interviews and reviews as well) in the past in which the coordinators have not fully agreed with. There are two columnists we disagree with in this issue in this issue: Felix Havoc arguing against removing statues of Confederate soldiers *(Really???)* and the column about BDS.

Our issue with Felix is pretty simple. Arguments like these imply that if it weren't for statues, street names, and other public ways of paying tribute to the Confederacy, then the public would totally forget that the Civil War even occurred. This is patently false, as everyone has access to a plethora of books, lectures, and podcasts with information about who did what during the Civil War. His argument also disregards the demands of Black / POC organizers in the South that are fighting to get these memorials removed. They rightfully argue that these statues, which were mostly built during the Jim Crow era, stand not just as a tribute to the men who fought to maintain slavery (and thus also the institution of slavery), but also as an intimidation tactic against recently freed Black people. Because of the clearly racist history behind the construction of statues celebrating Confederate war dead (and the dedication of public space in their honor as well), we hope Felix reconsiders his position and perhaps does some further research into the reasoning behind these memorials.

While we agree about the importance of supporting BDS, we disagree with the thoroughness of the stance that the author makes, sometimes finding it wishy-washy. We ran this mostly because we saw the information in it as useful, and gave the author the benefit of the doubt by considering their language to potentially serve as a rhetorical technique to teach new people about the significance of BDS and sway them to their side. However, Miranda and I feel this "soft" approach makes their author ineffective. The author makes a comparison about crossing a picket line at one point, and in this case some of their points feel straight up like endorsing scabs. Notably lines such as this: "trying to attack a punk band for refusing to play in Israel you are essentially trying to force your tactics on them whilst totally disrespecting theirs." The point of BDS is to cause non-violent financial damage in order to affect change in policy. We believe it is our duty to directly call out those people who do cross the picket line and to insist that they stand with Palestinian citizens.

3. In response to Felix (and others) who are upset about the briefness of the Tim Yohannan feature: so am I. Despite advertising it on the back pages of *MRR* for months, despite multiple social media postings, despite posts on forums, and despite some effort to reach out to his friends, we received only a handful of responses, the great majority of which we have already published. As I was going through the emails that we had received, I understood why: many people who loved and cherished Tim Yohannan do not seem interact with *MRR* anymore. I was hoping that we would have much more content to work with, but alas... I had put myself in a bind by promising to run this content, despite having such little material to work with. I will be doing my best to make amends for this. Once I learn how to use our new fancy website (have you visited it yet???) I plan to create some sort of page where people can comment their memories. It will likely be on the page where we posted a lot of the older photographs that Tom Yohannan sent our way.

4. The last you heard from me, I was griping about feeling like shit. Well, guess what... that ain't a unique moment in my life. Ever since moving to *MRR* I've found myself descending into some really dour moments. Thanks to the sheer power of caffeine, I have found the fighting spirit to combat the days where I struggle to escape the mental fog that the combination of dysphoria, anxiety, and depression can bring. But sometimes even caffeine can't push me through the shit.

There are a number of reasons why I feel like shit—the stress from my new jobs, the special isolation that comes from having the majority of your friends live in another timezone—but I believe that I have found the main one. You see, up until my move to San

Francisco eight months ago, I spent many of my nights as a guitar mangler. After closing up the record store, my friends and I would head to our practice space (this would only happen at night—we practiced in a warehouse without any air conditioning, which was *unbearable* under the Florida sun). There we would practice for hours at a time, several times per week (at my happiest we were approaching an average of three to four days per week). Much of my time playing there was spent with a huge grin smeared across my face, as if I had just smashed an entire chunk of birthday cake into my face. And who could blame me? Putting together a new song (hell, even working out the kinks of one) is the same thing as creating a new baked good, and performing it well is the same as munching on it. Needless to say, this fucking glutton was thrilled to be at every band practice and impromptu jam that I could.

I was totally oblivious about how much I missed playing guitar until recently. You see, I foolishly sold all of my gear for next to nothing to my close friends. I came here without even a shitty acoustic guitar to practice on! I didn't realize I was starving for musical release until I was offered a chance to perform with a friend, an experienced drummer looking for more people to play with. I showed up without any gear, and after working together for a bit, we realized we needed a bass to flesh out some of the ideas we had come up with. So the drummer asked her partner to come down to the garage and work things through. I felt myself undergoing a burst of creative energy, and together we created in rapid succession two new songs. After the first song was completed, I was surprised to see the same smile spread on my face. Even after practice, I couldn't stop beaming—I felt at peace with myself. Expect to hear about more music from me in the future.

Now if only I could find a fucking black and white Epiphone Korina Flying V repro for cheap. (Hint hint nudge nudge.)

5. I promised you that I would write more about my experiences with transitioning in this column, and ever since then, I've been silent on the matter. Truth be told, transitioning (AKA puberty jr.) is an emotional rollercoaster, and I've had a difficult time conveying all of the highs (oh my god I have a different orgasm!!!) and lows (holy shit I can't stop crying over *everything*). One positive is that as my body is changing shape, women's clothes are fitting my boxy frame better than they had in the past. Because I look better in them, I have finally felt comfort in being publicly out. But this is not a positive thing: as I became more and more comfortable going out in more feminine clothes, I learned that *visibility is a trap* very quickly through microaggressions and more overt methods of harassment.

Visibility is a trap because to be visibly trans is to not conform to society's acceptable gender performances. *Visibility is a trap* because non-conformity inevitably leads to violence against bodies who are not read clearly as society's ideal version of "man" or "woman"—those who are young, white, able-bodied, and passing are treated better than those who are not one or more of those things. *Visibility is a trap* is shown through statistics starting from 2014, "the year trans broke" due to Laverne Cox appearing on *Times* Magazine, which report that threats of violence against transgender individuals are rising.

Visibility is a trap is a main theme of *Trap Door: Trans Cultural Production and the Politics of Visibility* (MIT and New Museum Press), the next book on my reading list. Contributions are solely by transgender individuals and cover a variety of subjects about the way that visibility often undermines their safety. So if you've read it...don't spoil it for me!

6. I fear I'm going to parrot Andrew Underwood's column in this section. Manic Relapse was all right, but I was mostly excited for the opportunity to see LEBENDEN TOTEN for the first time. How many times can I describe this band by just saying *fuuuuuuuuck*? Because I was fucking flabbergasted by their performance—they were extremely casual on stage, but their sound was more intense than almost every band that night. For those keeping track, I have now moved on from having a band crush to being full-on in *love* with LEBENDEN TOTEN. Also a highlight was CONTRAST ATTITUDE, whose raucous attitude was a total contrast (forgive me) to the more stoic LEBENDEN TOTEN. I stood (or rather, was bent over against the PA) directly in front of their two guitarists, and while I was maniacally grinning back at them, folks, I felt as though I have seen the light. CONTRAST ATTITUDE gave a glimmer of the ecstatic truth; they are the apostles of the church of Kawakami. And I am here to share their message with you: *"who can change the future?"* Let us pray that we, the fucking punks, can change the future. Shout outs as well to PHYSIQUE *(punk life is shit b/w always fucking restrictions)*, NEEDLES, and ORDEN MUNDIAL for making me wanna puke my brains out.

I won't parrot Andrew again, but I was also thoroughly disappointed with the apolitical nature of Manic Relapse, but I promise you that I will save my thoughts on that for another column.

7. Shout out to the GERMS' (*GI*) fucking *quilt* that someone was selling at Manic Market. It was sick, and the person who made it did a fantastic job.

8. Y'all, our new distro coordinator is fantastic. I met Vicky Cassis not long before she applied and I immediately felt a kinship with her "Happy Worldwide" brand, even though I so often feel like I've been thoroughly run through a trash compactor. We're all really excited about working with her, and just like with Miranda (who's still here—she says hi) earlier this year, I'm excited to have her as a new roommate, and look forward to nights playing the Nintendo Switch and talking about crushes together.

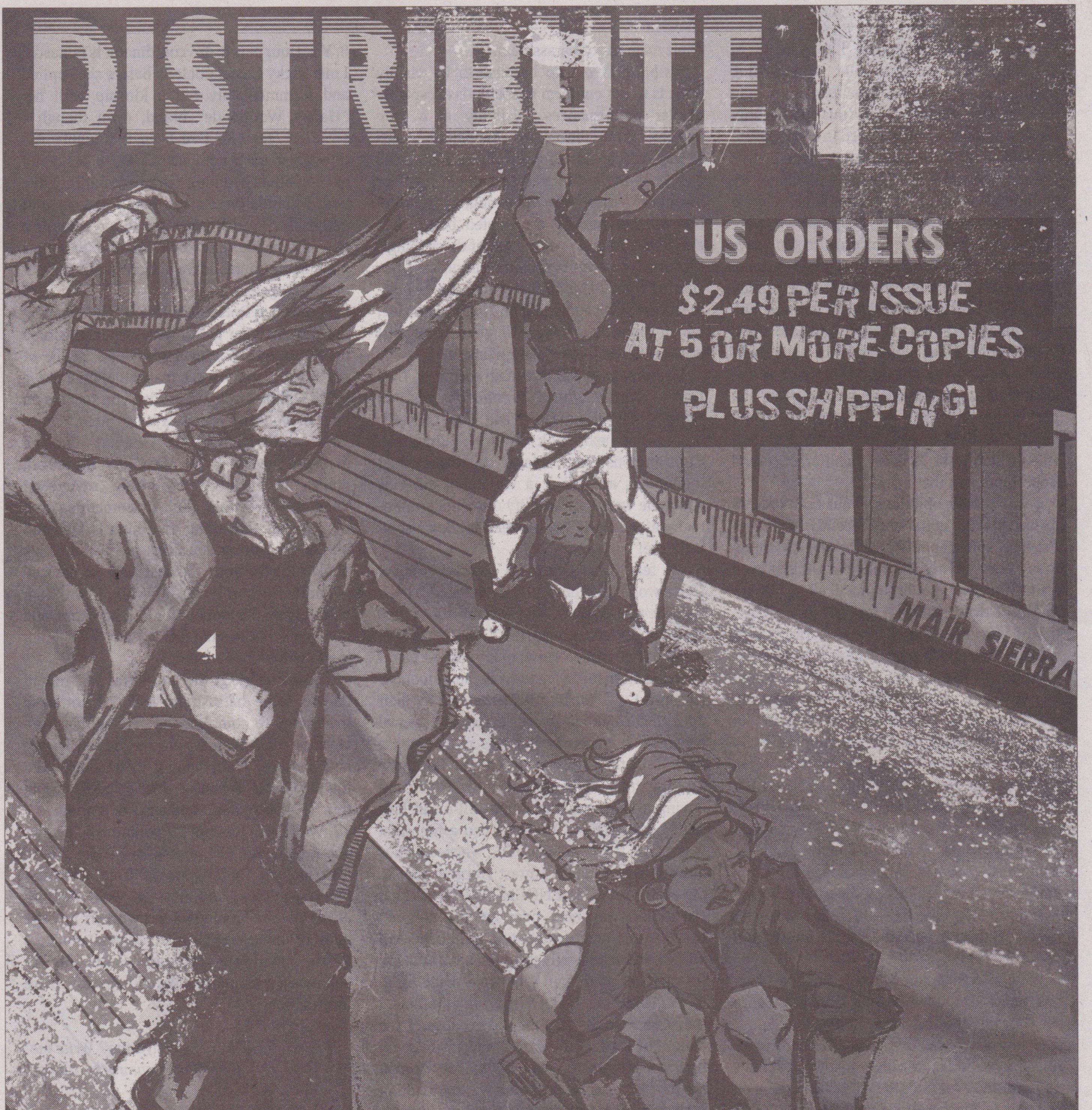
9. Farewell to Rotten Ron Ready! He is leaving the Bay Area for good, with his sights aimed on Pittsburgh. Editing his reviews is one of my favorite tasks at the magazine; his unique voice will be missed! We wish you success on your move. May you always be rotten.

10. If you live in the Bay Area and wanna be a record reviewer for *Maximum Rocknroll*, you're in luck: we're hiring reviewers! Send three reviews (one of something you like, one of something you think is OK, and one of something you think is shit) and five punk records from the last year to layla@maximumrocknroll.com. While we are currently on the lookout for Oi!, hardcore, and pop punk reviewers, fans of any DIY punk genre will be considered.

11. I became pretty distressed this past month due to some harassment and did not have the energy to complete the perzine that I am working on. Now that I am feeling less fragile and anxious, I am hoping to be done with the zine soon. Tentative title: *POSER!* Get in touch if you're interested and / or a poser.

12. We're still looking for columnists to write about hardcore, Oi!, metal, and noise. We're also looking for columnists from Central / South America, and Asia as well! And as always, we're looking for sex workers to write guest columns as well—discretion guarantee.d Please email our columns coordinator at columns@maximumrocknroll.com for more information.

Did I miss anything? Write me:
joan@maximumrocknroll.com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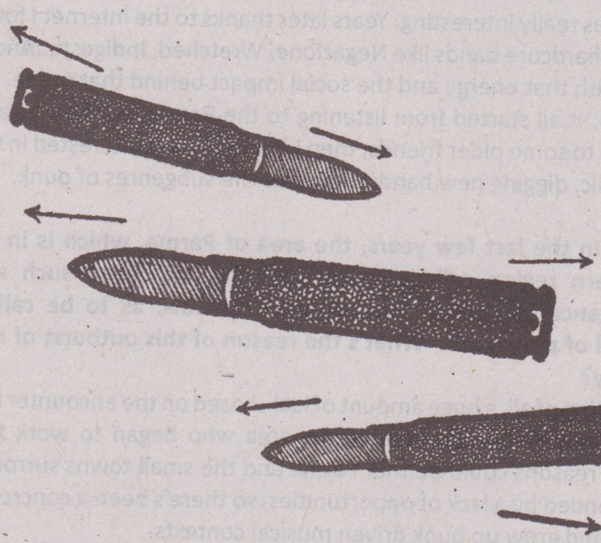
SHITTY LIFE

The mighty Shitty Life formed in 2015 as a four piece, including Iggy (vocals), Lollo (guitar), Nocciola (bass) and Luca (drums). With this lineup they recorded a two songs demo on a four tracks cassette recorder called Demo 1. This was all before Lollo moved for six months to Goteborg.

Meanwhile, Iggy decided to go visiting him and together with a local, Emil, they recorded three more songs (Demo 2). Once Lollo was back, the four piece recorded a third demo. (Try to guess? Demo 3, of course.) All those three recordings ended on a unique tape called Demos, and the third one ended on a single-sided 12" released by Surfin Ki records. 2016 saw the band recording new material for a collaboration 7" with DD Owen (Sick Thoughts), on which he sings over Shitty Life's music (thus Iggy playing the second guitar). After a while, they added a second guitarist, Piff from Trento, after the split of Sang, who also plays / played in a zillion bands (Dadar, Crop Circles, Impulso just to name a few), and with this lineup they recorded the Faith 7" and the S/L one, on different labels. They have toured both Italy and Europe, especially Germany.

Now it's their time to speak.



Introduction and interview by Pulce Panino.
Photos by Timo Hüntler, Elisa Piatti, Michele Guerrini, and Ciski

MRR: Finally, another Italian band in *MRR*. I think the last interview with an Italian band was about Dots and Rome's Nofu. Are you happy to be interviewed by the bible of punk?
Lollo: Without being a total kiss-ass, we can say that is an honor for us. We have been *MRR* readers for years. Not so many webzines / fanzines until now have reviewed or written about our band so far, so that's make this thing even more valuable for us.

MRR: By the way, what do you think of the two bands mentioned above?
Iggy: Two really good bands from the Italian scene that we know best and which we played shows with. Not only very good bands, but also very good friends.

MRR: How did you get into punk? Was it easy to discover punk when you were growing up?
Luca: I used to hate punk—I was a metalhead as a teenager! But when it comes to the commitment and culture...punk is love.
Lollo: In my experience it was two separate phases. The first one was when I was teenager stealing tapes from my older cousin like Sex Pistols, Ramones etc. That was my introduction to a certain kind of sound and attitude, but at that time I couldn't have any contact with more underground or obscure bands, just well known bands. I've started to dig more after my twenties by hanging out at gigs, meeting new and older people with great knowledge and good taste in music, always giving good advice. At that time I also started reading magazines and fanzines and also that helped a lot!
Piff: First there was a friend of mine in high school when I was twelve. He made me listen to this song from an Italian band (Punkreas) that was about stealing stuff. I thought it was great and totally different from everything I'd listened before. Than he made me a tape with Ska-p on the A-side and Skruigners on the B-side. That was my starting point. After gaining some interest for the first years in punk I discovered most of stuff by myself driven by a giant curiosity. It was early

2000s, I was not so much interested in Fat Wreck stuff that the people in my school were listening to. In my first years in punk it was mostly me downloading records one song at a time, really from the first music sharing softwares and digging some shitty but great geocities fan made websites.
Iggy: I used to listen to punk rock since I was a teenager. My brother, who is fourteen years older than me, sometimes took me with him to see some shows. It was nothing related to DIY but I discovered a world that was really interesting. Years later thanks to the internet I found '80s Italian hardcore bands like Negazione, Wretched, Indigesti...And I felt in love with that energy and the social impact behind that scene.
Noccio: It all started from listening to the Ramones when I was young thanks to some older friends, then I started to get interested in this kind of music, digging new bands and all of the subgenres of punk.

MRR: In the last few years, the area of Parma, which is in the rich northern region called Emilia Romagna, has seen such a recent resurgence of bands, clubs, squats, festivals, as to be called "the capital of punk rock." What's the reason of this outburst of renewed energy?
Luca: First of all, a huge amount of luck, based on the encounter between some crucial personalities of the area who began to work together. Other reasons could be that Parma and the small towns surrounding it are bonded by a lack of opportunities, so there's been a concrete will to build and grow up punk driven musical contexts.
Lollo: I think, in every situation, people makes the difference: right people, right place, right time. That's also how we formed the band. We're hoping more teenagers will join us to keep this in the future!
Iggy: I believe that this new energy is mainly based on the need to book shows and be active in a world that for us Italiani (generally speaking) is really secondary. Even with really few means. We are a small community in Parma and surrounding area, but a really collaborative one. We are a perfect example of a small group of friends living in this city with the common goal of supporting the punk scene with the few resources we've got.
Nociola: There are many different bands made by the same people with the same goal and sustaining each others. Then we all hang out at the same places: in Parma we have social centers like Artlab or Casa Cantoniera, musical / artistic collectives like Buuuio and La Défense who book shows in a DIY practice space called Saletta Adorno. In Fidenza there's a long running club called Taun with a garage and punk scheduling. In Salsomaggiore, the mighty Devils Den has sadly shut down, but anyway every year the city hosts the Festival Beat. In the small town where I live, Fornovo, there's nothing really significant; me and Lollo come from here and there are bands like Wah'77, RHC...A few years ago, we bought a skate ramp and started to book secret shows in our rehearsal place so people can skate and listen to bands at the same time.

MRR: You mention in your response that the punk scene in Parma is a response to the lack of things to do in the area. Oftentimes the (re-)emergence of punk subcultures in areas sometimes indicates some political dissatisfaction with the status quo. Are there political reasons why Parma is seeing a resurgence of things like squats and bands?
Lollo: I think it has been more related to social / counterculture reasons, the desire to see, discover, and share something different in music and art. Parma is a pretty conservative city, starting from the food and elsewhere, and I think it was also about underground music and even punk (a guy with leather jacket and spunky hair = punk, that's it). I think a different view of underground and DIY came up lately in these years involving a big group of people. But I want to be pretty realistic, Parma has always been like a wave today you're riding high and tomorrow you're drowning.
Luca: There's no real political reason about that. I was just born in Parma...a city really far away from a "punk" subculture, so the only way to build one up was to do it by ourselves. That's what we're doing, and to be honest I don't care if it's going to be huge or shitty it's just my way of living and doing everything I really care.
Noccio: I think it's just passion, desire to do something, being with other guys who obviously have the same passion for music and way of thinking, young people from Parma are very "standard" and boring somehow, but unfortunately I don't see that much this passion we have in the youngest generations.
Igor: Punk has always been a political response to the middle-class society. Parma is a small city dominated by

Timo Hüntler

middle-class, that's why squats, punk and al the subcultures are poorly considered by people. And we start from this, working with collectives and promote DIY culture.

MRR: Let's talk about your sound: undoubtedly your roots are planted in certain kind of punk with huge hardcore influences; the guitar sound is very thin and with not much distortion. It reminds me of bands like Vicious and the Shitty Limits, but with a taste of melody typical of some power pop or old '77 punk (Kids and Buzzcocks above all) and with no doubt a huge love for early Black Flag. Am I bullshitting?

Lollo: We've always called it chitarrino-punk; our friends Youth Avoiders from France call it "clean-clean." The meaning is the same: fast punk, almost HC, with hi-tone and clean guitars. For me, it was really natural sound 'cause before Shitty Life I've always played with indie or garage bands with more or less the same guitar sound. We really really love old power pop and KBD punk. I don't know if you mentioned that cause you know our taste or you really hear these influences in our music! *[laughter]* By the way, early Black Flag was our common base when we formed the band.

Luca: You basically said it all. You named only bands which influenced us a lot. You can easily add that we are real musical nerds, pour in some KBD and a passionate love for lo-fi / budget rock and our identikit is complete!

Iggy: To cut it short, we love to break ears with mid-high frequencies.

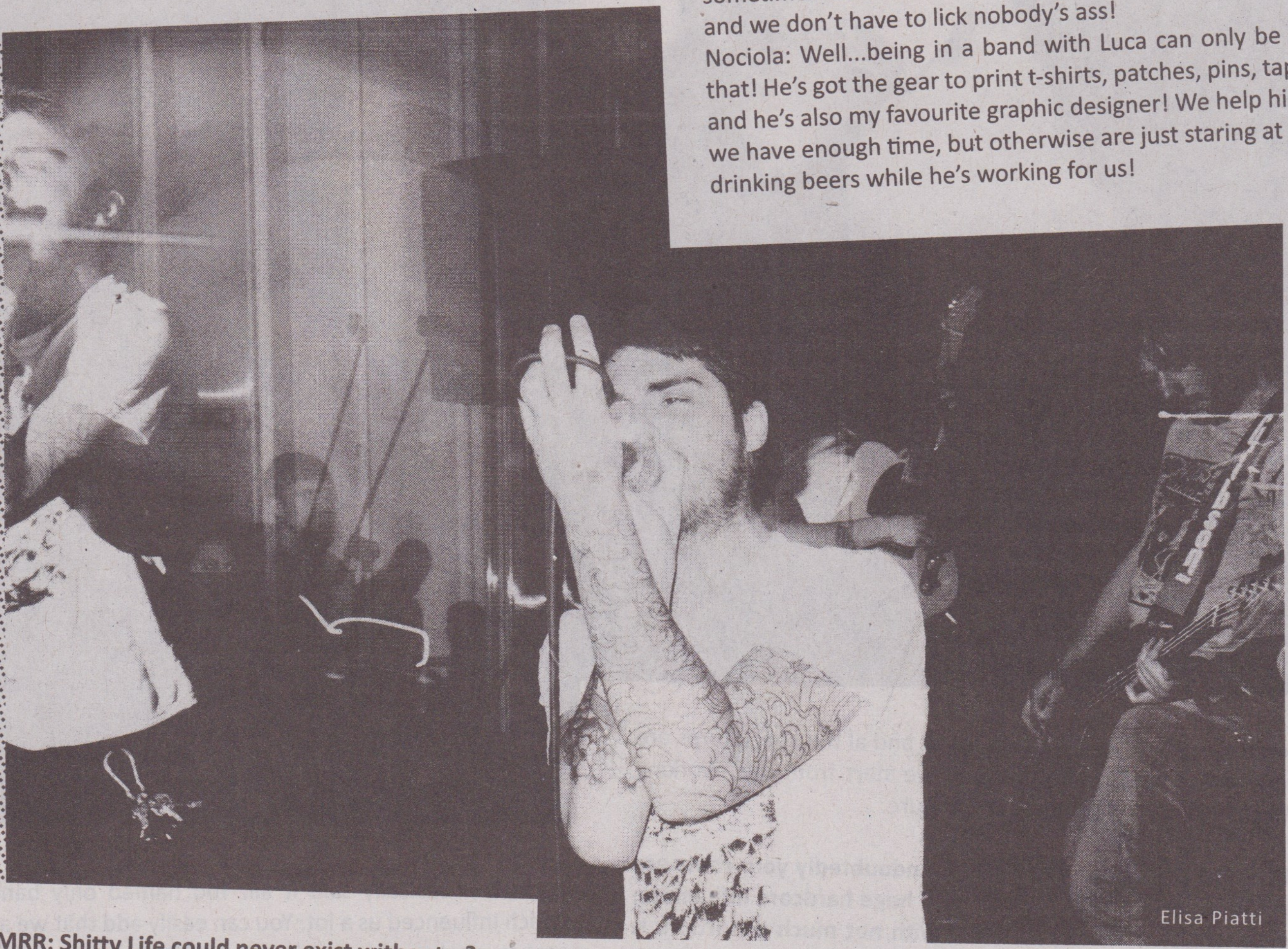
MRR: How is DIY important for your music? And in the approach of the whole band? In my point of view, the only thing you're missing is to manage a vinyl pressing plant...

Luca: The DIY approach is something that keeps us together even over the music we play. It's the foundation on which the band is born, and it's the only thing that keeps us going on. It's not a joke, a while ago we even started to talk about a vinyl pressing business. *[laughter]*

Lollo: I must admit we're really lucky because we, as a band, are capable of dealing with everything that concerns the band like recording, graphics, merch printing, booking shows and tours... It's truly something we are proud of because every step of the process is an outcome of our own work. We can't figure out any other way. Just trying to imagine Luca and Piff in a real recording studio with a real sound engineer! I think they wouldn't stand it longer than five minutes. We have really clear ideas on what we want, from sounds to graphics; having a third party in the process would only make the job more difficult. Lots of young bands work with press and booking agencies. When you try to reach them to book a show, they don't deal directly, but delegate to an agent who handles the booking process. For our scene, it's a bit ridiculous to me because half of the fun is also in taking care of these activities in first person.

Piff: Talking about the new record: me and Luca have all the stuff needed to record, I mixed it, Luca is doing the graphics, Lollo is the one with organizing skills, writing emails, etc., Iggy and Nociola brought "torta fritta" (local food) and limoncino while recording to give us the right grit! So yeah, we do most of the stuff by ourselves. We learned a lot in the years spent doing stuff this way and I can say that even if sometimes it's a lot of work it's really fun, satisfying, cheap, and we don't have to lick nobody's ass!

Nociola: Well...being in a band with Luca can only be like that! He's got the gear to print t-shirts, patches, pins, tapes, and he's also my favourite graphic designer! We help him if we have enough time, but otherwise are just staring at him drinking beers while he's working for us!



Elisa Piatti

MRR: Shitty Life could never exist without...?

Lollo: For sure without Faustatone and the "sdumbarabara."

Luca: Peavey, limoncino and our vehicle called Shittycar.

Iggy: Limoncino, cheap bad cheese "pacco cheese," easy mix compilations, and a joint to stay more relaxed.

Piff: The insane eating and drinking routine of Parma.

Nociola: Without limoncino!

MRR: I know you have recorded a new record, but I don't know if it's going to be a single or an LP. Do you think you would be capable of writing an entire album without sounding too boring and repetitive? Are we going to find any synth parts in it?

Lollo: We have recorded many songs right now, from which we'll choose around ten. We're almost sure it's going to be a 12". The risk of being annoying is always around the corner. This time we have written more different stuff than usual, more rockish, but without forgetting the faster parts. Our priority is still writing and playing songs that please us and that send shivers down our spines while playing them. We don't really care about the rest. Maybe we are going to be Vice's favourite punk band ever, who knows? There's a new one every month! *[laughter]*

Michele Guerrini

Luca: We can easily leave the synth shit to Dadar. I don't know exactly about the LP, we'll repeat ourselves for sure since sometimes we already confuse one song with another!
Iggy: Mmm, we'll see once finished. I think the whole point is to write a record made of songs that *we* enjoy first.

MRR: Are you a politicized band? In Italy, we are facing a violent return of the extreme right wing (even if maybe it's not a real comeback since some feelings of hate never vanished in some fringes of the population), sometimes even in musical circles. How does the band deal with those clubs who are not taking a stand against it and instead give space to ambivalent / unclear bands? Is the "grey zone" still so wide, strong, and unaware? Is the so called "banality of evil" a theoretical idea or instead is the "complete lack of awareness about our own actions" still rooted in our society and our musical scene?
Luca: We are a band made of anti-fascists. We don't and will never play in places attributable to any of the "right wing." Same for all the ambiguous ones. I'm pretty sure that our "musical circuit" is strongly aware of it, and I believe that our vision is shared with the majority of the bands of our subculture...I must admit I'm proud and happy about it.
Iggy: Sure, we are into politics. We are straight-up anti-fascist. It's not that easy in a country like Italy, where the church has a strong influence on politics and everyday life. As you said, we're living in hard times, considering that the historical center-right political parties are shifting to the extreme right. It's an alarming situation: just few weeks ago a neo-fascist idiot shot a group of migrants, injuring six of them. Regarding the punk scene, unfortunately there are bands operating in a far right-wing scene, but we specifically support places bonded to extreme left-wing or anarchism, leaving no free space to idiots of those neo-fascist movements.
Piff: Here in Rovereto, a bus driver didn't stop multiple times at a certain bus stop because it's the place where refugees usually take the bus. The saddest part for me was reading the comments from local people in the newspaper: half of them where supporting or at least justifying the driver's choice. What you say is true; we're facing a return of this shit and that just make me sad. It's obvious to say but also important to note nowadays: we're anti-fascists. If we got requests for shows booked by people we don't like, we simply don't play and support them. Actually, we never get asked for it; the Italian punk / HC scene (even if less than in the past) is still really linked with squats and a certain ideology.
Nociola: Musically speaking we've never been in ambiguous situations or sharing the stage with those kinds of people.
Lollo: Everything's already been said by the rest of the band; I just want to underline that we always check the circumstances we're going to play, even when it is in foreign nations. If we should find ourselves in an uncomfortable situation, we wouldn't hesitate to load our Peaveys back into our Shittycar and move away.

MRR: What are some ways that you and your friends combat or organize against the far-right menace?
Luca: With regards to Parma the ways are mostly based on boycotting the right wing sympathizer venues / bars, supporting antifa squats, taking part of demonstrations, always condemning hate, racism and fascist bullshit... basically being part of a mutual community and leaving no space to those assholes.
Iggy: Fortunately Parma is a small city and the far right is not too scary. But the fascist disease is not eradicated, especially during the elections the political climate was so bad and they gained public consent. But we're trying to do our best to keep the town clean.

MRR: I know that you are all busy with other bands as well. Please let us know all of your music-related and non-music-related projects you are involved in.

Lollo: Apart from being considered the mastermind behind Dadar (isn't it true?), I'm running, along with Luca and few other guys the magazine / fanzine Sottoterra: it's basically dealing with everything from old to new punk / garage / hardcore / psych and it's all written in Italian. We recently added a radio show, and we printed the live LP of Uranium Club *Live at Arci Taun*. I've also run an insignificant and tiny label called Rude Soul Records with ultra-limited tape releases. Right now, when I'm not busy with Shitty Life, I'm spending my weekends booking shows mainly at Arci Taun in Fidenza with my mighty friend Zanna.

Do I need to tell you that all of these activities are self-produced and totally volunteer?

Luca: I also play in the VAM Society and the mighty Garlic. I run Sottoterra Fanzine with Lorenzo and an old fart called Frazzi, I have a little label called Lo-Fi Lo-Life, I'm in a DIY volunteer rehearsal space called Saletta Adorno where we also host funny shows, I keep doing screenprinting projects and booking shows. Everything is severely DIY and strictly made with self-produced methods.

Nociola: I play guitar in Wah'77, we're a Punk trio!

Piff: I have this project called Dadar...no, sorry, that's Lollo. I play bass in Impulso and drums in a new band called Ciski and the Paltans. Apart from that I'm running a mobile recording studio called Frìzzer.

MRR: It seems to me that some of you are obsessed with a specific type of gear (for example Luca, the drummer, called his dog "Peavey"). Where does it come from and why?

Luca: My passion / obsession for Peavey was born many years ago after the meeting with Carlo (who used to play in Shiny Brown from Switzerland) who let me try his Mark III Bass, a bass head,

Ciski

with my guitar. I instantly fell in love with it, and since then I've never stopped searching / buying / trading for every single piece Peavey made until early '80s. And for course my dog is called Peavey, and they know him.

Piff: Sure, we do love amps. Especially the low budget ones or those that for strange reasons are sold for ridiculous prices. Since we are broke most of the time, we often split the price and buy the amps together (we call it "*smezzare*"). I'll never forget that time me, Luca and Lollo went to Bologna to buy a Peavey Deuce (it was really cheap). We plugged in the guitar, and after the first note Luca showed a particular smile that we'll never forget!

Hey you Americans! We really need your old Peavey amps we can't find here in Italy: Musician 400 bass, Vulcan, Dynabass; send them here, we'll send you back some Vatican merchandise.

MRR: Are you members of the Peavey cult?

Luca: Fuck yes I am! I just love old Peavey shit: cheap and built like tanks. High five Hartley! Send me some free old amps from your basements!

Lollo: We actually continuously check it if there's good deals on it. I certainly know Luca every fucking morning is checking "Peavey" on eBay or others online marketplace about music instruments. Lately he even bought a Peavey PA system that is totally useless to him or the band but he justified himself by saying: "You never know, could be useful one day in the future, I could also play guitar in it!" And our reaction was "Ok Luca, we have a problem here!" *[laughter]*

Iggy: Yes we're all into Peavey cult. Even at the beginning Luca wanted everybody to play with Peavey amps and guitars / bass.

MRR: Hey Igor, I want to ask you about your love for old soviet architecture. Am I wrong? What's that about? Can you suggest us any publications about?

Iggy: Yes, I have this weird passion for Brutalist architecture. It's a tendency born in Europe during the '50s. In the Soviet Union, this style was very common to build national memorials, hotels, and public governmental buildings. The most fascinating thing about them is the majesty of every single release, made with rough concrete and with huuuge dimensions, a style that instills uniformity and submission. One of my favorite photobooks is *Cosmic Communist Constructions Photographed by Frederic Chaubin.*

MRR: Do you have any Italian bands to suggest to *MRR*'s readers?

Piff: Thee Loyal Wankers from my town Rovereto, Lucta, Skalp, Dots, the Rippers, Movie Star Junkies, Hallelujah... if you like to dance and trippin' you must listen to DJ Daniele Baldelli.

Nociola: Well, of course my band, Wah'77! *[laughter]* For sure Donald Thompson, Antares, Impulso and Thunder Bomber.

Lollo: Aside from the already mentioned ones I'll add Lame from Turin, Destroy All Gondolas from Venice, Chow from Bologna, Sushicorner from Cagliari, and Metro Crowd from Rome.

MRR: Nowadays, image has almost completely replaced the word. How important is appearance in modern punk rock and, specifically, how is it important for your band?

Luca: Appearance? Half and half. If you are talking about the way we look, I can easily say we do not give a fuck. If you mean our layouts, record, and merch graphics, that I have taken care of on my own. I personally have always been fascinated by the imagery of the early hardcore scene, both Italian and Northern American. I have always used the collage technique to create those "monsters." We can add the above mentioned love for Brutalist architecture, the concept of abandoned houses, and all the trash made by the human being, and you have a whole picture of our imagery.

Lollo: Of course image has always been really important in the punk movement, since the early days when it was used to communicate a specific message.

As Luca said, we prefer to communicate through our records and graphics rather than our personal look / appearance. (Consider that we don't even have a picture capturing all five of us together, and it has been fucking hell finding some decent pictures to send for this interview!) Personally, I got easily bored by trends both in the band's look and in the cover / layout graphics: combos wearing completely black suits, specific earrings and the gothic font are very popular nowadays. At the same time, there are for sure other bands / individuals thinking that we, as Shitty Life, are following a specific trend, but the truth is we only wearing bootleg t-shirts screenprinted by Luca!

Iggy: We don't care about the way we look, we just wanna *rock*!

MRR: Who are the bands that care too much about image?

Luca: Bands made of superficial people only looking at the last trend and doing some copy / paste music with copy / paste graphics. I'm not really into looking at these details, but when it's that evident...I find it a lot funny!

Lollo: We can call it "fashion," not natural and instinctive has it should be.

Iggy: Don't know, I don't want to pay too much attention on that!

MRR: Any last words? (Contacts, future projects... maybe an American tour?)

Luca: You need drug dealers' contacts? Well, as we said we have just recorded a new record; we are planning a small tour in Greece and another ten days around Europe when the new record is out. Right now we are not planning a US tour; you should book it for us, you bastard!

Lollo: We got some offers like "Hey, if you need a show in (fill the blank space with any unknown Midwest cities / small towns) just let us know!" so nothing really serious planned. Of course we would be honoured to play in the US. Now we're also looking for a US label / distro to spread our shit over there. Even if my biggest dream is playing in Japan!

As last words we want to thank Tholos, Shitty's sixth member; when Nociola is overworked he always joins us getting wasted and playing bass. Toccio.

Here are some contacts:
bandcamp.com/shittylife
facebook.com/chitarrinopunkgenuino
peaveythedog@gmail.com (we never use it so try at lorenzo.belli.0310@gmail.com)
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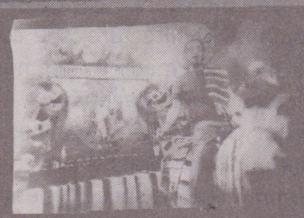

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HAIRCUT

Haircut rose from the ashes of some of Virginia's best bands circa 2015. After Daniel B's stint with bringing the heat to Fried Egg for a year or so, Haircut formed with members of Animal Planet and Christi. Juliana has been around the punk scene for years; finally she's joined a band, and her presence is a true present. Too often, the bands in Richmond never leave Richmond, so I'm super happy to say Haircut is touring, active, doing interviews, and writing some of the best music in Virginia. Haircut is not a band to only play only the "cool" shows or hardly have a local appearance; they are so active here and I can't get enough. They're out playing benefit shows and with touring acts, seems like every week. Haircut is a band devoid of trendy gimmicks so many bands cling to; Haircut provides pure perfect hardcore punk with quick, perfectly dense songs that are in and out in a minute or so. With members that have been between Richmond, Charlottesville, and Virginia Beach, they are Virginia's punk band.

Interview by Brian B. Photos by Farrah Skeiky and Martin Sorrondeguy

Juliana: Vocals
Daniel B: Guitar
Sarah: Bass
Daniel R: drums

MRR: So you guys started as a Charlottesville band, do you want to talk about starting in Charlottesville and then moving to Richmond?

Daniel B: Daniel R. was living in Richmond when we started

Daniel R: All of us have lived in Richmond and Charlottesville a number of times back and forth. It wasn't a difficult transition.

Juliana: *[to Sarah]* Did you?

Sarah: No, I grew up in Virginia Beach.

Daniel B: We've played in other bands that were between both cities. In Animal Planet, Daniel and Sam lived in Charlottesville, but we would practice in Richmond, and then with Fried Egg, me and Sam R. lived in Charlottesville but practiced in Richmond. So we're used to the commute.

Daniel R: Ol' 64 lane.

Daniel B: Daniel R. had to come to Charlottesville to practice.

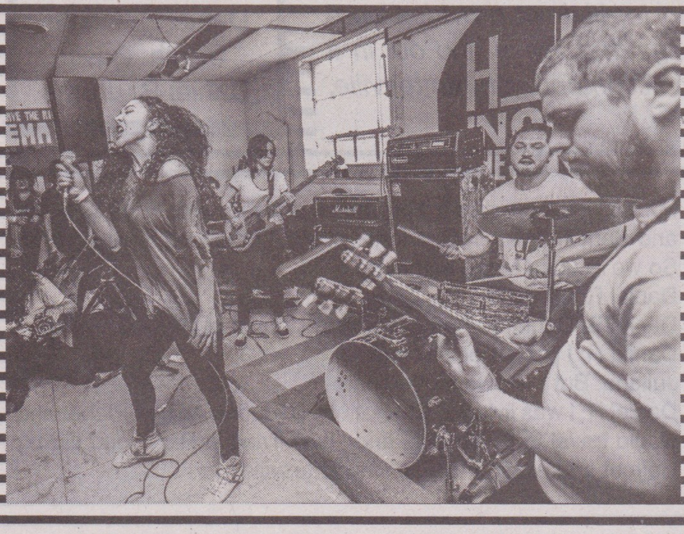
Daniel R: I got especially fucked.

Juliana: But then we moved here!

Daniel R: I was living in Charlottesville during Animal Planet and would travel to Richmond, and I was living in Richmond during Haircut and would travel to Charlottesville.

MRR: But then you got them to move here.
Daniel R: You could say that. I guess it was just fate I guess. [Daniel B. and Juliana] lived in New York for a month, and they weren't there for that month.
Juliana: Yeah, we were supposed to move to New York.
Daniel R: We had plans to stay a band when they moved to New York. Which involved me driving to New York...
Juliana: You would have been super fucked!
Everyone: *[laughter]*
Juliana: Daniel B. and I always wanted to do a project together, and since we were living together at Magnolia house in Charlottesville, a show space, it just seemed natural to do it there because we could just practice downstairs. Originally our other roommate, Ben James, who's on the record playing bass, he just kind of picked up the spot because he was home.

MRR: What was living at Magnolia House like? What is the scene like in Charlottesville?
Daniel B: It was really awesome.
Juliana: Yeah I miss it.
Daniel B: The scene's, well, I don't know if I'd call it a scene, but the people in Charlottesville, the people that come out to shows, are a lot of younger people and a lot of weirdos come out who just want something to do. So you get a really different vibe at the shows there. There's more of an older crowd in Richmond.



Things will get out of control a little easier in Charlottesville, lots of pent up weirdness in the youth there.
Juliana: Yeah, everyone's really excited.
Daniel R: If you're in an underground band in Charlottesville, it's way hard to find shows. Shows at Magnolia are such a great thing because there are so many kids with no place to go in Charlottesville because it's not really welcoming to any type of counterculture music.
Daniel B: A lot of people come to shows from the counties outside Charlottesville.
Sarah: I drove to plenty of shows from Richmond that were at Magnolia House, y'all had lots of good shows there. It's always really fun.

MRR: It seems like an anomaly of houses in Charlottesville that just happened to find its way into the hands of weird freaks who want to do shows there. Finding another house there that would want to do shows there seems like it would be hard. And the house is insanely cheap too?
Juliana: Ridiculously cheap. But also disgusting and amazing.
Daniel B: The house is falling apart, but it isn't so bad there.
Juliana: It's just really really old and poorly kept. The whole time I lived there I never met the landlord. I couldn't tell you his name. I have no idea what his deal was.

MRR: Who you'd pay rent to?
Daniel B: You pay rent to the guy who lives behind the house.
Juliana: Who works for the landlord.

MRR: But he doesn't work on fixing the house
Daniel B: No, that's the deal. You don't get anything done for you but you can do whatever you want in the house. It's a devil's bargain.
Sarah: It was bad when the kitchen flooded.
Juliana: I will say I don't know if I would have felt as confident being in a band for the first time if we hadn't started at Magnolia in Charlottesville specifically.
Daniel R: We played that place like a dozen times.
Juliana: We were like the house band.
Daniel R: Our first five shows were there I'm pretty sure.
Juliana: Because of everyone coming out either to see a show or hang out, it was really friendly. Also living at a show space and seeing bands come through and play was really encouraging for me 'cause I was really nervous. I can't imagine feeling as confident about it if I had started here in Richmond initially because I was intimidated by it.
Daniel B: There's also some good punk bands from Charlottesville. There are three really good bands.

MRR: Who are they?
Daniel B: Wild Rose, the Attachments, and half of Fried Egg. The Attachments didn't start until recently. They have a couple tapes out. Wild Rose has a few tapes out as well. I tried to put out there second tape as a 7", but they weren't into it.

MRR: So Sarah, you joined the band, so how has it been?
Sarah: Haircut is the first hardcore punk band I've been in. It's also the first band I've played bass for. One of the biggest differences from past projects that I can think of is how regularly and how often we practice. I feel like most other bands I've been in have been sort of like, "oh, you want to practice once every week or two," and we're usually in the space one or two

nights a week. So it's nice to have something productive to look forward to on a regular basis.
Daniel R: Me and Daniel have been in bands together for eight or nine years now, so it's pretty similar to a lot of my other bands.

MRR: But is this going to be the one that makes it, though.
Daniel R: This is the most politically charged band I've been in. All the other bands have been about stupid stuff, like about personal mental health or something, but that's not stupid—
Everyone: *[laughter]*
Daniel R: Just like me complaining, just selfish bands.
Juliana: That's not selfish.
Daniel B: I started playing in bands as an excuse to hang out and drink a lot of beer. So it's been kind of weird to not do that. I pound seltzer water at gigs now.

MRR: And that's kind of the topic of the first song on your record...
Juliana: Segue!

MRR: I'm pretty familiar with the 7", I've jammed it many times. Juliana, I'm guessing you wrote all the lyrics?
Juliana: Yeah, I wrote all the lyrics.

MRR: But I guess you guys also stand behind them as well. Do you want to talk about the first song, "Fucked Up"?
Juliana: Sure. That song means a lot to me. Being sober has been the most challenging thing I've ever done and continue to do. And it's not that I don't like alcohol, like I fucking love alcohol, and I loved it. But it was destroying me, physically, emotionally. I had to stop. I wrote that song after thinking about how many encounters I've had at shows, including when we lived at Magnolia, shows were we played where I'd have people try and talk me into drinking or doing drugs. And people that I like, people that are nice...It's so easy to dismiss alcohol and drugs as being a very serious problem when it's such an embedded part of the subculture and most alternative subcultures. So yeah, when I was hanging out with friends and someone was talking to me, coaxing me, "You're not going to do it again?" "Are you sure you never want to drink ever again?" "What about weed? Would you do that?" "What about this? What about that?" just playing devil's advocate so hard. And I didn't get mad at them in that moment, but maybe I should have. I shouldn't have to explain to anyone in those moments why I don't drink or why I don't want to or why that's a really personal question for me. So I wrote the song because I don't want to have that conversation all the time. It doesn't happen all the time, but when it does come up...It's funny how people assume I'm like super straightedge. If I could have it my way, I would drink all the fucking time, but when I do, I turn into a maniac and it's irresponsible for me and the people around me. I can't safely get fucked up and be a safe person to be around and a productive member of whatever community I'm a part of. But for whatever reason, it can be difficult to talk about in a genuine way. If someone you see at a show every time you go is joking about having a very serious problem with drugs and alcohol, which could kill them, and everyone laughs about it, how can we say we're looking out for our community? You're not looking out for people who are telling you they have a serious problem with alcohol. And I'm not judging anyone for drinking or doing drugs, I'm around it all the time. If you can do it safely and happily, that's fine, but I try to reach out to people when I hear

them allude to having a problem with it, privately. Like, "hey, if you ever want to talk about this, I've been through it, if you ever see me at a show and you feel weird, we can go outside."

MRR: I think that's really important. I've only ever been part of the Richmond punk community, but from what I've seen of other places, I'm sure it's not just here, but alcohol abuse is not taken seriously. I think it's also partially just our generation having a very ironic and nihilistic outlook on our problems. Bands like Who Killed Spikey Jacket? criticizing and mocking themselves and the genre so no issues have to be taken seriously. Such a fucking stupid waste of art and time, that band sucks. There's so much of that culture that it makes people, including myself, to bring up substance abuse with people I care about.
Juliana: That song is about my personal experience with people being like "well don't you ever want to do mushrooms again?" and me being like, "*no! I don't ever want to get fucked up again!* I don't do that anymore!" Just that's it, we don't have to talk about it, just drop it, I'm sure you're having a great time, you look really happy, but I don't do that.
Daniel R: And a lot of bands are either like, "we're straightedge," or "we party," they don't acknowledge the complex relationship you can have with substances.
Juliana: That's what I'm saying, no judgment, not all of us are sober and there's no ill will—never! We don't have that dynamic

at all. To each their own, but I cannot do that in a safe way.

MRR: So that song you're writing for everyone who's annoying as shit—
Juliana: Yeah! Just like, leave me alone.

MRR: —so do you have groups of people in mind when you write a song? That you're aiming a song towards?
Juliana: No, I actively tried avoiding that. Going into this I have shit I want to say and I feel strongly about, but I don't want to speak to other people's experiences. So far all my songs have been about me and for me, about my experiences, with other things people can maybe relate to. I don't think I have the authority to speak to certain groups of people, and with the English and Spanish, my songwriting process is very lazy in that I don't plan ahead that "this is going to be a Spanish song" or "this will be an English song." I usually just sit on the couch at practice while they're all working really hard and play with my phone and think about the mood of the song, and I kind of vocalize nonsense to the music for the timing and the rhythm and go back later and fill it in with words. It works good with Spanish for some and for some English. "Patriota" was maybe the most intentional besides "Fucked Up." It is about my experiences of being first generation of immigrant parents being born in the US. My family came from Colombia, South America when my mom was pregnant with me. So I was born in Alabama and we were there for a while but also lived in southwest Virginia near Tennessee and then lived outside of Atlanta and then Charlottesville. So I've had a very southern experience in the US as a daughter of two immigrants who had very thick accents when I was growing up. I came to resent my heritage for a really long time. Mostly aesthetically: I hated my curly hair, and I hated that I looked a little different, and that's being like really fair-skinned. I'm not brown, but hair was my big giveaway, and I didn't want anything to do with the culture of my parents. My sisters went through the same, and I know that's an experience a lot of people have that come to the US, feeling like you are not a part of it, which is already a huge feeling when you are a kid, I feel like. I kind of wrote this song from a younger perspective than where I am now. It's essentially me wondering out loud how different my life would be if I had been born in Colombia and had grown up there, and how much of me I missed out on by not being born there. And then also about growing up here and feeling like I am American, or understanding American culture but not getting it back. Like not getting that same understanding or recognition, being a part of everyday life here and people talking to me like "What are you?" "Where are you from?" "Can you speak Mexican?" That really limited understanding of being Latinx that a lot of people have. My family and I lived in a town where we were the first Latinxs that had ever lived in this town ever, you know what I mean? So it was just like, "I do the same shit you do, I want to order pizza and go to the movies and watch MTV when I come home from school, and you're coming at me with these questions like I don't understand this culture or I don't belong here in some way." I've reconciled with almost all of that now. So that's now from a younger perspective. Especially since I've tried educating myself more by reading and talking to other people who have had similar experiences, and less privileged experiences as immigrants or children of immigrants. I have been in a position mostly of privilege in this country because I'm white passing and my parents had some connections when they came here in the US. But yeah I can relate to being both, Colombian and American, in that weird space that I'm happy to be in now.

MRR: So to touch on another song of yours, do you think most men in punk don't think of it as a boys' club?
Sarah: Well, I think this is a good example of a band that doesn't think that.

MRR: I just mean like when you're at a show and you say "this song is about how this is a fucking boys' club and it sucks," I'm not trying to put words in your mouth about what your song is about—
Juliana: No, those are literal words I've said

MRR: Do you think that men at the show don't even see it?
Juliana: I don't think that's exclusive to the punk scene. It's present in almost every culture and community. I think I've met more people going to shows and in bands that seem more open to talking about it. Within the band we talk about this all of the time. I think a lot, if not most, of straight white men live in a plane of existence where anything different than them is an abnormality and so they wouldn't see it as a boys' club because that's just the norm for them.
Daniel R: If you're benefiting from the structure of the scene, you're less likely to question it or challenge it or change it because it works for you and it's more comfortable to ignore other people's issues. And that's the case for any institution, not just music.
Daniel B: Richmond's got some pretty pockets. I guess there's some different crowds in Richmond's punk and hardcore, but there are some that are pretty inclusive.
Sarah: Yeah, I've definitely been seeing a lot of diversity in bands over the last few years.
Juliana: And there's a lot more to be done.
Sarah: Yeah!
Juliana: The progress is definitely welcome, but let's not get too comfortable yet.
Daniel R: While there's still a lot of progress to be made, diversity and intersectionality are way more normal now. The narrative used to be like, "have a taste of this exotic female fronted band," now it's just like "that's a sick band playing music."
Juliana: As it should be.

MRR: Do you find inspiration in old punk music? Sometimes when I listen to an old punk band, I think, "I would hate these guys."
Everyone: *[laughter]*

MRR: Like if one of these bands timewarped to 2018, I'd be like "fuck these guys," but in retrospect people worship these bands, like what we're supposed to be or sound like. Is this something you ever think about?
Daniel B: Maybe as people they were shitty, I don't know, and I don't think it's really a great thing to keep trying to reinvent the past. But the really powerful thing about '70s and '80s punk is that they took risks, both sonically and with their lyrics. They did whatever the fuck they wanted to do. And that's the part that should live on. For me, those bands were always about finding a way to feel free in a society that can be suffocating

at times. It seems like people in punk and hardcore don't care about that so much anymore. People are really afraid of what other people think about them, I think. There's a big social element that is not something that I want to be a part of. I got into this because I didn't like all that social shit, and punk felt like a place where it was acceptable to be damaged. Hardcore gigs in Richmond are kind of like going to a homecoming dance at private school in NOVA, but the dudes are all in their mid to late 20s, maybe early 30s, no doubt still nursing some debilitating shoulder chips from their formative humiliations in suburban high schools. Punk is much different in that regard but still suffers from perpetual nostalgia for certain eras of punk. That's not to say that our band is above any of that sentimental crap, but it is something that I think about.

Daniel R: It's important to consider context. Look at Bad Brains: their energy was so groundbreaking for their time, be influenced by that, make it modern, make it better.

Daniel B: Yeah, I also like it when bands can do a bunch of different styles really well.

MRR: Yeah, I love to see a musician that's in like three completely different bands. Like the singer of Vexx did CC Dust and also a country rock thing called the County Liners. I think of myself of someone who likes all those genres, so it's really inspiring to see someone making all those genres themselves.

Juliana: I feel like we can all relate to that. That's an important part of Haircut, all our different interests, and they all play into what we do.

Daniel R: The standard is really high, cause there's so many sick bands I just see so many drummers that rule. I practice so much and I think I'm getting better at drums, and then some sixteen-year-old drummer just blows me out of the water.

Sarah: I've noticed you've gotten better since I've known you.

Juliana: Yeah you're awesome!

Daniel B: You good!

[Everyone applauds Daniel]

Juliana: It's hard to see your own progress.

MRR: There's a lot of great Virginia bands that never end up in this magazine, so who do you want to shout out? Any band, really.

Sarah: I have so many. Daniel B's new band Cement Shoes is really sick. Another new band I really liked was Itsy Bitsy, they played at Be Bad Weekend. Wild Rose.

Juliana: Wild Rose!

Sarah: The Attachments.

Daniel B: Destruct is killer.

Sarah: And the Ar-Kaics, I really like them.

Daniel B: Fried Egg, too.

Daniel R: Hybrid Warfare, Enforced, Deviant.

Daniel B: Kombat and Closet Christ from DC were probably the best bands I saw in the last few years.

MRR: Rest in peace! OK, is there anything else?

Daniel B: Oh yeah, and there was a question about the name Haircut, I was going to say we originally named it Florist's Cut but then we changed it to Haircut.

Juliana: You didn't like it at first! You don't remember this correctly. OK, so my little sister came up with the name. We both liked it, but then Daniel B was like, *no*. Then he came around.

Daniel R: It's also kind of a thing were we had a placeholder name that turns into the real name, which happens with all my bands basically.

MRR: So what's next for Haircut?

Juliana: Writing some new stuff.

Daniel R: Playing out of town.

MRR: Great. Awesome. Is there anything else? Recording?

Daniel B: Maybe.

Daniel R: We have new songs that we've played live.

Juliana: He's the riff master.

Daniel B: Too many riffs.

Juliana: Riff factory. Every practice I feel like there's a new song.

Sarah: Or two.

Daniel B: And then half kind of get lost and never come back.

Sarah: I was thinking earlier about songs that appeared at one time and then—

Juliana: The songs that never worked. We should do a tape of the songs that never worked.

Daniel B: Some of them were cool. They could always come back.

haircutva.bandcamp.com

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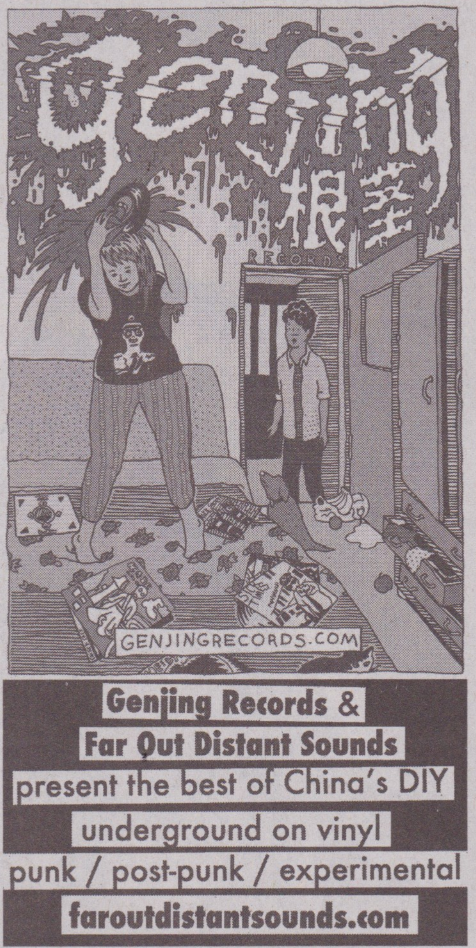

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AIWT

AIWT (short for *Ансамбль им. Вилли Токарева—Ensemble in Honor of Willy Tokarev*) refer to their band as the "degra-core" genre. The band was formed at 2014 in Moscow. The band consists of Rodion on drums, Andrey on guitar, and Pasha on bass. At the time of publishing, assuming that no band member has died under terrible circumstances, their new album is out now.

Interview by Raria Mad of Churchella.

Photos by Mezuza.

MRR: Could you describe the music you are playing for people who are not familiar with it?
Rodion: Look, this interview is for the magazine.
Andrey: It's pointless trying to explain it to people who are far from punk and hardcore.
Rodion: And for those who listen to it, I'd say that we play "degra-core," corresponding to the degradation of modern society in the Aquarius era.

MRR: Why are you doing this? Not music, this band.
Rodion: I personally express myself, why else? Not for money, of course!
Andrey: I simply play the music, that's all. I use it as a some sort of a natural antidepressant. I don't know if there could be a difference between music and a band.

MRR: Well, sometimes various bands serve all kinds of needs, like, for instance, technique improvement, money, or different emotions.
Andrey: I can't imagine that division because I don't do music for a living, and everything else is indivisible.
Pasha: As a musician with several bands, I'd say that all of them include communicative interest and technique improvement as well as lack of money and emotional expression. Of course, it's easier to express some emotions in one band than in another, but all these emotions come out of your life. Each of my bands is equally interesting to me both as technique improvement and as communication and also emotional aspects: different music, people, and emotions that I can express as well as feel. Also, all the bands are equal in having no chance of monetary success.

MRR: What Russian bands influenced on you the most?
Rodion: Early Grazhdanskaya Oborona in my young days, Messer für Frau Müller.
Andrey: What was the question? Hmm, Grazhdanskaya Oborona, Orgasm Nostradamusa.
Rodion: Fuck, I forgot to mention Orgasm Nostardumsa! Although I was a grown up when it broadened my horizon.
Andrey: I guess it's all from Russia.

MRR: What about foreign bands?
Rodion: Accused – *Return Of Martha Splatterhead & Maddest Stories Ever Told*, JMKE, Cryptic Slaughter, Napalm Death – *Scum* and *From Enslavement To Obliteration*, Kreator – *Pleasure To Kill*, Sodom – *Agent Orange*, Death – *Scream Bloody Gore*, Morbid Angel – *Altars Of Madness* and *Blessed Are the Sick*, but the most influential band for me is Nomeansno, from the '80s.
Andrey: Slayer, Cryptic Slaughter, Infamous Sinphony, Strebers, Boxhamsters, Broken Bones – *FOAD*, Japanese Acute, and Gudon. Plus maybe Dystopia.

MRR: What about those who still perform, those who function somehow?
Andrey: Zlurad, Rudolf, Pissdeads, and the rest no longer exist. Also, there is a good band called Doloto, but they're at close-to-comatose state.
Pasha: When it comes to influence, for me as an AIWT member, Andrey and Rodion have the most influence because until I became a member of the band I had poor knowledge of that sort of music.

MRR: Did it broaden your horizons?
Pasha: Well, it inevitably does if you play something you have never played before.

MRR: So what's your contribution?
Pasha: I add some nuances in bass parts.

Rodion: In a week we will be recording stuff and we are still discussing some nuances.

MRR: What sort of nuances?
Rodion: Compositional, arrangement.

MRR: What are you going to record?
Rodion: Ten tracks.
Andrey: The album will be short.
Pasha: That's including a cover.
Rodion: We'll see, I guess it'll be twenty minutes tops.
Andrey: The first one lasted twenty minutes.
Pasha: Then this will be fifteen.

MRR: A perfect punk, grind, hardcore band...How does it sound?
Rodion: I dunno, but a perfect punk album is the second Exploited album, grind is first two Napalm Death albums, and there's plenty of hardcore. Napalm Death used to be a big influence on me, now they're not. They've changed and so did I. I'm not the boy that you can easily influence. At present, they're a good hardcore band that tends to release similar albums.

MRR: What's your favorite musical genre? Name something that pleased your ears recently.
Rodion: Fundamentally it's hardcore punk, so that's what I'm listening to. If that bores me, than I put early Throbbing Gristle and Psychic TV.

MRR: A healthy relationship with music! What bands have you been into in the last six months or a year, what's the most fresh musical discovery did you have?
Rodion: As time passes, it's harder for me to marvel. The last time when I was surprised, it was 2000 at Melt Banana; that's where it stopped. Then it's all the same: not interesting or I've already heard it. There is some stuff, not much to be honest, and I felt something only at live shows, like for example Girl Band, also this band where one plays bass and the other is Chip'n'Dale...
Andrey: Lightning Bolt.
Pasha: Ironically, Girl Band surprised me over the past six months, even though I was at the show too.
Andrey: Me too.
Pasha: Recently I began listening to it on record and was surprised. Straightforward and sophisticated. My euphoria from Melt-Banana and Lightning Bolt also can be described like that.
Rodion: All these new bands, they're all the same to me, and they're boring. OK, not all of them, but the majority.
Pasha: Can a good hardcore really surprise you? To my mind, it's like: "Ta da, great fucking hardcore!" That's not an amazement. Old schemes, new interpretation.
Rodion: Well, nothing is clear about it. Isn't "awesome" surprising? Why is it awesome then? At times I get surprised at freshly-found old underground hardcore bands.
Andrey: I can't name the genre of music I'm into, but it's for sure guitar music because I can't run away from it even if I wanted to. Everything gets boring in the end, but I can't find anything similar in electro music. Recently I haven't been listening to hardcore, punk and metal as often. I'm listening dub.

Pasha: Vaporwave?
Andrey: No, I just took stock of it.
Pasha: It impressed me.
Andrey: I'm impressed by dub. I didn't know anything about it before, so everything is fresh, interesting, and not only dub there's also reggae.

MRR: Maybe you could think of an old band that impressed you?
Andrey: I haven't been surprised in a long time.

MRR: But you're so young! If you could become a member of any band than who you will be?
Rodion: I dunno. I'm a member of this band and I'm happy with everything in AIWT. Nothing more to dream about.
Pasha: If just to play, than I'd play with any band that music I like. As a single experience, I would play with any band I like starting from Led Zeppelin to Girl Band.

MRR: If you could pick up any band and invite them to play a gig with you, who would that be?
Rodion: Triage, they're a bit like us: fierce, fun and too cliche.
Andrey: I'd pick them too. Also I'd invite Japanese band End of Pollution. At the moment their bass player has left, so I'd want them at full strength.
Pasha: Just add Napalm Death and Purgen and you get a nice fest!

MRR: Do you feel any support from the audience?
Rodion: There're a few chumps, not too many.
Andrey: In general, yes, I feel it. At the Sete Star Sept gig, some guys caught me and they kept saying what a great band AIWT is. They asked me when the new stuff will be out. I was very surprised, even shocked.
Pasha: For me, support is that every show I played as a member of AIWT there were a decent number of people who danced and were having fun. It is both support and pleasure for me.
Rodion: There're not too many of them, but they do exist.

MRR: Do you think that you have accomplished something, if yes than what?
Rodion: No, I don't feel like it.
Andrey: Yes, if I'm being honest. Maybe it sounds a bit self-assured, but I believe that we do something that differs from the majority. Well, perhaps it's not the majority, but there still plenty of bands who listen to something and then begin playing the same riffs and that's all they do. I'm glad that not everyone is like that.

MRR: As a person who often goes to your gigs, I came to conclusion that you are not close to anybody, or your scene is very small.
Rodion: We are not close to anyone. It's been always like that; we are all by ourselves.
Andrey: If by "scene" you mention a geographical term, then yes, and if you mean scene as a group of people with similar musical preferences, then it is also yes.

MRR: Is your band often being invited to play gigs?
Rodion: No, not often. We don't sing about anarchy and "fuck the system." Maybe if we did, then they would invite us more often.
Andrey: Don't forget Satan.
Rodion: We have one line about him.
Pasha: Yeah, but we exclude this song from our setlist. That is why we play once every two months.

MRR: Did you know each other before the band started?
Andrey: Rodion and I got acquainted on a online forum called Collapse. We chatted a lot, than met at some gig.

MRR: Did you know that Rodion was a musician?
Andrey: Yes, I knew that he played in Ieronimus Bes. For a long time, we together played in Shizo.

MRR: So you got to know each other and decided to start a band?
Rodion: Not exactly. I felt the necessity to play music. I was on bass, my friend Zuner on drums, and Kostya from Pissdeads on vocals, and I thought that we could ask Andrey to join us and play guitar, so that's how Shizo appeared.
Andrey: If to come back to the question about the name, than it all started from the advertisement in the Vkontakte. At the moment, I was really into Japanese noise-punk and wanted to play something like that, and Schizo didn't exist anymore.
Rodion: I had got nothing to do, so I agreed.
Andrey: The bassist I found with the help of this ad began with the line from one of Willy Tokarev's lyrics, who was a Russian singer of the cafe genre, living in New York since the late '70s: "Hello, comrades, ladies and gentlemen," so then I created a chat and named it "An ensemble in honor of Willy Tokarev"
Rodion: We laughed and decided to leave it.
Andrey: At first, we wanted to name the band Chemical Castration, but Rodion said that there there has been a band with this name already.

MRR: Do you plan or do you wish to tour?
Andrey: I have a desire, but I don't have such opportunity. We all have jobs. I work in the science field, so it's hard to get a vacation there. It would be interesting to try, but considering all difficulties our friends faced while touring in Russia I'm not sure that we could handle this.
Pasha: One location trips were good if we can count Balaschicha *[a small town near Moscow where a cult Garage 32 is located]* and Saint Petersburg.
Rodion: It's just some spots, it's much more complicated to go to a real tour.

MRR: If you could pick just one location, what would it be?
Pasha: I'm ready to go anywhere.
Rodion: Sochi.
Andrey: Tokyo.

MRR: How do you compose your music? Does someone brings riffs or do you jam?
Rodion: We bring riffs or complete songs to the rehearsals, don't jam.
Pasha: No, we do, but nothing good comes out of that, zero tracks.
Rodion: We just fool around, it has nothing to do with creating stuff. After the music is ready, Andrey puts a couple of phrases as a vocals and that's all, folks: song is ready.

MRR: Do you both bring riffs?

Andrey: Yep, mostly it's the complete songs, like surrogates, you just have to work at arrangements and some parts.

MRR: Do you have fights?
Rodion: No, no, no one has any disagreements. There's nothing to be fighting for. If someone offers something that is better, then how can we fight?

MRR: And if one thinks that it was better and the other that it was worse?
Rodion: I haven't been in the situation for a long time.

MRR: Do your lyrics correlate with your life? Can I say that your lyrics are autobiographical? For instance, you have a song with lyrics "I'm a pig, I'm a pig, I'm a drunk pig, mama please, excuse me, dear..."
Andrey: I almost don't drink. One song has a real basis, but I won't share it with you.
Rodion: Hardly any of the audience of the magazine will get it, it's like there's some guy in Canada and he reads it and thinks "What the hell these Russians are talking about?"

MRR: When did you begin listening to fast and heavy music?
Rodion: It was at school. It started with heavy metal, then in seventh grade a bit of punk rock: Exploited, Sex Pistols, Dead Kennedys, Dayglo Abortions. Thrash metal, of course: Sodom, Kreator, Sepultura. Then comes death metal, then I came back to the old stuff, full circle.
Andrey: My story is almost the same except the for time. It's all started with Russian rock bands like Kino, Nautilus Pampilus and Alisa, then there was hard rock, heavy metal, Manowar, etc.
Rodion: Manowar, well done!
Andrey: I liked Accept more. Then Grave Digger, Slayer, etc., then I discovered DIY internet. But before I did, I also listened to Orgasm Nostradamusa and Exploited, and then I dug up "Crust faq," and from there I found out about other hardcore. Noisecore impressed me back then very much, so that's how I rolled.

MRR: When did you start to play guitar?
Andrey: Dunno, a long time ago. My grandfather played guitar, he taught me and my brother. My brother plays better than I, but he doesn't have a band.
Pasha: My first musical passion was Prodigy, I was 7. The road that started like that couldn't end well.

MRR: What was your best and / or the worst live show?
Rodion: They're all in the future.
Andrey: The best was in Saint Petersburg.
Pasha: The club is no longer open.
Andrey: Yes, also it was the only gig where we played not the first or the second.

MRR: Maybe this is the reason?
Andrey: I myself like to play at the beginning.

MRR: Why?
Andrey: You come, play and you're free to go. There's a tradition that you don't watch the first band, but I think we have to fight that.
Rodion: Let them all come to watch the first band, and then leave and drink, instead of the opposite.
Pasha: The awesome thing about Saint Petersburg is that a half of the audience came with us from Moscow. Also the last gig in Balashikha was great.
Andrey: There was a strange one in Balashikha: Pasha didn't play with us back then, but he was in the audience, as was your precious interviewer...

MRR: You hit me with your guitar neck!
Andrey: I'm sorry! The guy pulled the plug out of my guitar and I had to stop playing, and there was a girl and she screamed the whole show.
Rodion: I hate those drunk fuckers! They fucking fall and plugs are out!
Andrey: And pins are twisted unscrewed off!
Rodion: So you're playing and all of a sudden everything stops, for fuck's sake, and you're like, "Jesus fucking Christ, fuck!" Please, translate it as it is.

MRR: Do you like activity in the audience?
Rodion: I like the activity but when my show stops, I fucking don't like it, I despise those fuckers.
Andrey: In Balashikha, somebody was having intercourse on the sofa near the garage where we played during the show, and some guy runs into and he's like, "Guys, they're fucking here!" and it was during the pause between songs.

MRR: Could it be that a new life appeared while you were playing your set?
Pasha: That sort of activity I like more than some boredom. If we're talking about weird shows, it was a Hero Dishonest show and we supported them, and it was very lame from the perspective of the audience. Only the singer of Pominay Kak vali was walking all over the space and hit his head. This situation is much worse than when drunk assholes fall on you.
Rodion: Sore faces is our reality, you can't escape it. No, I fucking don't like when a drunk fucker falls on you. I get it, he's fine, but maybe he is so drunk that he's out of all senses and he even doesn't know where he is and what's going on, so screw him!
Andrey: It's hard to choose. Yeah, I will accept falling assholes, but still, the moment when they hit the microphone or unplug guitar, I don't like them at all.

MRR: Were you being those assholes yourself?
Pasha: In my opinion, I suppose that it still drives you. He falls and you think "Oh, you're a fucker!" and you play a riff louder and more evil. Sometimes I am that guy, but not as far.
Rodion: I used to be.
Pasha: I was very often in my youth.
Rodion: I didn't interrupt musicians. However, I liked to hit cymbals during shows. It was considered OK.

MRR: So you sit and play?
Rodion: No, it's when a friendly band is playing and everyone's drunk and out of nowhere there are sticks, and then some fucker (and sometimes it is you) comes right to you and starts to *tram-pam-pam*—someone on toms, someone on cymbals—it's your fucking song and they interfere. I did that stuff in my youth, I must admit.

MRR: Are there any bands that you would refuse

to play with because of the ideological issues?
Rodion: With Nazi-fascists, with right-wing fuckers.
Pasha: I have never have a situation where I could say "Fuck you, I won't play with you!"
Rodion: Also I won't play with assholes.

What do you think about the future of Russian thrash-grind-hardcore? What will stay in the past, and what's gonna be in the future?
Rodion: I won't lie if I say that we don't observe the current situation in extreme music in Russia. Sometimes you find something that is not bad, but I don't dig Russian scene. I'm into '80s Europe, that's what I'm interested in. Russian is a copy made of a copy and I always prefer the original.

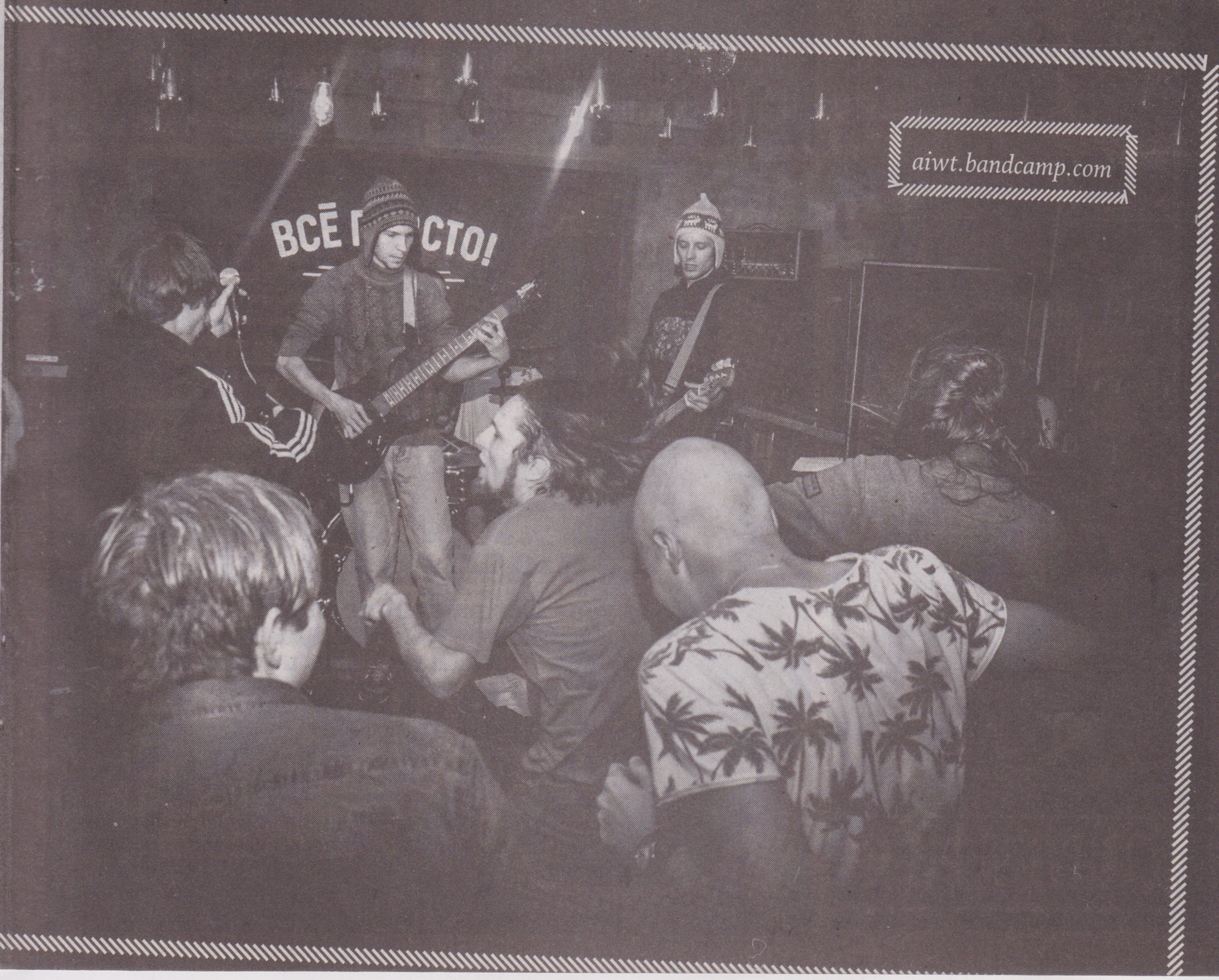
MRR: Can you claim that you are not a copy?
Rodion: Yes, I can: "We're not a copy." Of that I'm sure. Nowadays everyone has unlimited internet access as fuck. The younger generation is growing up, everyone's up to stage, everyone is a musician, has a band, so there will be some future, but it depends on what you call the future. Bands will be playing, but whether it will be good or bad I want to know myself.
Andrey: I guess that the future will have the bands that simply want to play the music, and they don't think about whether it is hardcore or not.
Rodion: Don't try to be a king of a punk hill.

MRR: Can an extreme band become popular in Russia, what do you think?
Rodion: There was GrOb, and I doubt that something that big will occur. But who knows. It has to be a band with a Russian identity, and we lack them, we try to play like them, like you.

MRR: Have you ever been to one of their shows?
Rodion: No, I haven't. When they performed in their early days I was too young, and I also didn't know anyone who goes to concerts like that. So then they broke up, and later it became unfair and I forget about them.

MRR: What was unfair?
Rodion: Well, what the fuck, "Today we play as a band" and then he is like "We've broken up," and after that he changes his mind: "No, we'll play." Yesterday I was an anarchist and today I'm communist.

MRR: What are you gonna do if revolution begins in Russia?
Rodion: If revolution begins, we will go to rehearsal.



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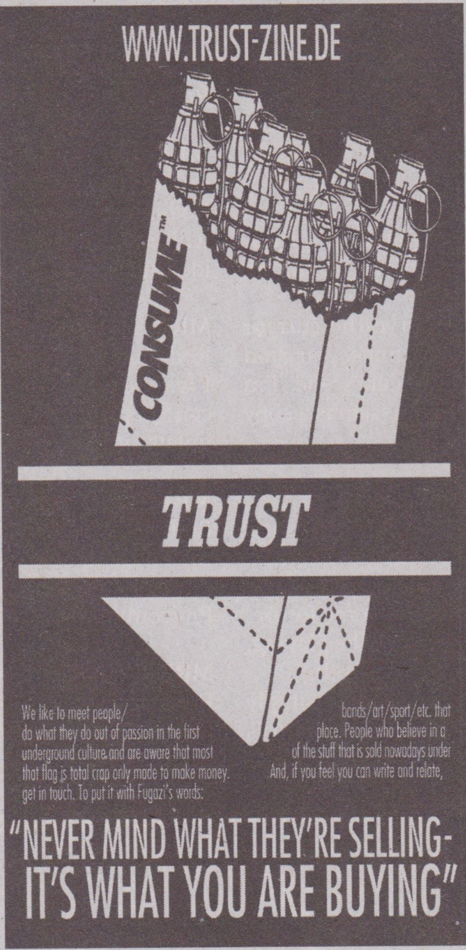
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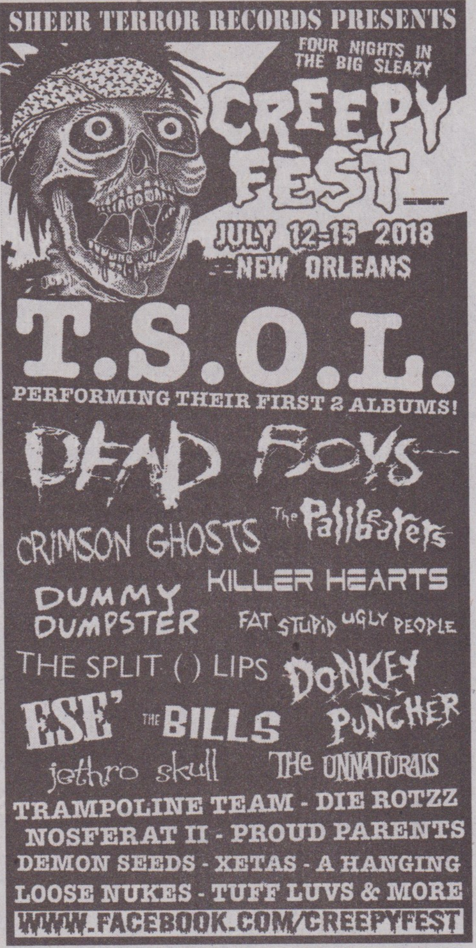
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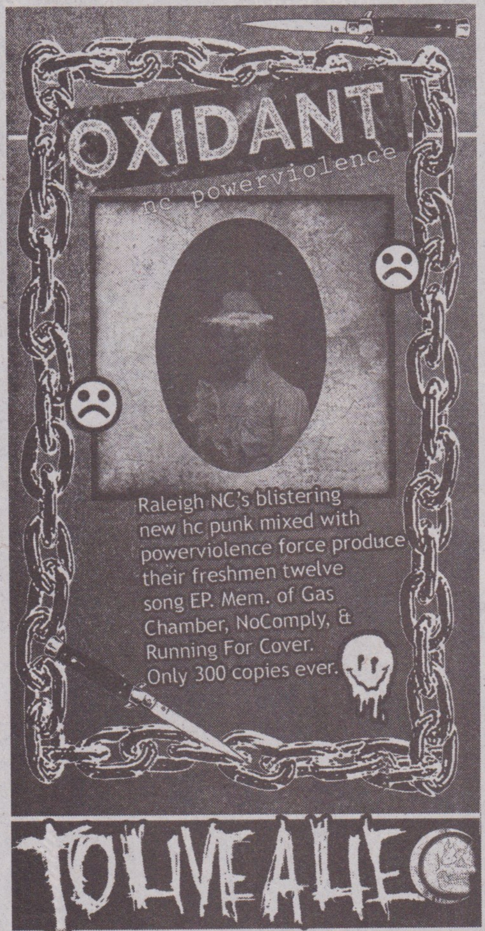
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LARS FINBERG

8 PM, Friday, Highland Park, Los Angeles: "You look fucking great, man," Dwyer tells Lars (note: He says "fucking," not "fuckin'", thus imparting gravitas). "Not drinking makes you look twenty years younger," he continues, pausing to take a swig of bottom-shelf wine out of the bottle.

According to Dwyer (John Dwyer, that is, the definition of an unreliable narrator), Lars Finberg, present non-drinker, looks like he's at the beginning of his career, but he ain't. With a recorded output that predates 9/11, Lars Aldric Finberg has seen some shit.

Please allow me to bore you with the details everyone else who has ever written about him bores you with, all of which are easily accessible on Wikipedia: former drummer of the A-Frames and Oh Sees, captain of the vessel that is the post-punk (is that a term people still use? Sure, why not!) junk ship the Intelligence, he is beloved by American rock critics and European coke fiends and average men with names like Matt and Jake.

After releasing nine albums and a whole mess o' singles as the Intelligence, he released his first "solo" album, Moonlight Over Bakersfield, *in December of last year. Fans of albums in which he remains the primary creative force yet don't have his Christian name emblazoned on the cover of them, fret not—an Intelligence live album, recorded in San Francisco, is coming out this September on Castle Face Records. Fans of live music who reside in the liberal bubble that is the West Coast, take additional note: he'll be crawling up and down the left side of the map this July.*

Don't let the fact that he has matured out of talking shit, cries while watching La La Land *and wears readig glasses onstage (They help him see the frets better, alright? Christ) fool you, he is still punk.*

Introduction and interview
by Megan Koester.
Photos by Lloyd Mongo

MRR: You've been releasing albums as the Intelligence for almost twenty goddamned years. What possessed you to release one under your Christian name this late in the game?
I like the Intelligence's music to sort of evolve, and I didn't feel like evolving. I thought it'd be fun to try something new and not use a band name, but it turns out I think I might hate it.

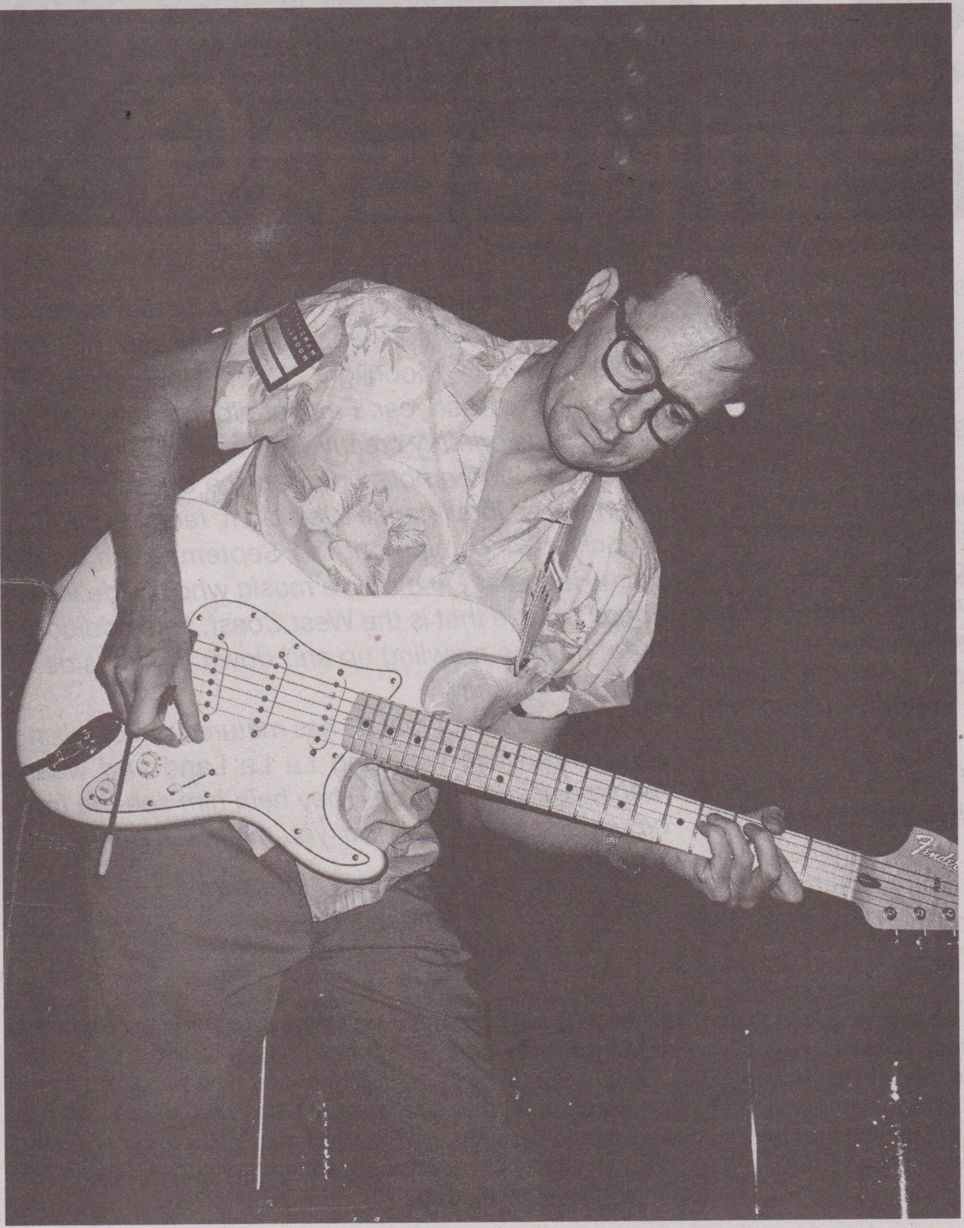
MRR: Why *might* you hate it? Why aren't you sure whether or not you hate it?
I mean, I like having a new project and new band, but it feels awkwardly un-inclusive not to have a band name. I doubt it feels sexy for the bass player to say "Oh, me? I play in *Lars Finberg*." It's a bit clunky. But the label insisted, saying we'd make a lot more money. I'm kidding.

MRR: So are you going to abandon the Lars Finberg name and go back to the Intelligence? Or something else?
I'm just trying to apologize for and downplay my vanity.

MRR: Ah, humility. If you want to make it in the entertainment business, you better abandon your capacity for that PDQ. Wait—*do* you want to make it in the entertainment business? What does success look like to you? Do you feel like you've already achieved it?
[Laughter] I'd like to do *slightly* better than my most successful friend. I bounce all over the place thinking about what success is. When my blood sugar is properly maintained, I feel lucky to just have music pressed to vinyl and small rooms of people wanting to see us. When I'm hypoglycemic I think "Where's my beach house? I want to sleep until noon in my free morphine coma."

MRR: What motivates you to keep on keepin' on? Are you the sort of person who feels as though you HAVE to continuously create new music?
It's too late to give up and have *nothing*. But seriously, almost everything outside the creation itself is some sort of frustration—bong-inhaling booking agents, chicken feed guarantees, how small of a font your name is on a poster, three drink tickets for four people, ad nauseam—it all makes me want to scream. When it becomes overwhelming, a pep talk I give other people (or usually myself) when the failure mountain is cresting is asking "is it fun making the thing?" If it's not, then just give up—no one will care. They probably won't even notice. I keep doing it because my favorite part is putting the pieces together and seeing if I can do it better than before. Or worse in a more interesting way can work too, even.

MRR: So is this newest album better than the previous ones? Or worse in a more interesting way? It certainly sounds different than your previous records—more structured yet infinitely weirder. Why can't you just release the same fucking album every year until you die like Billy Childish?
Because I can't grow a mustache! Hmm. I think it's a little sketchier, but more interesting, maybe. It wasn't easy to make. Kaanan Tupper (who plays all the drums) and I started working on stuff and did some recordings with our regular engineer / producer Chris Woodhouse, but it sounded a little... not exactly "slick," but maybe more like an extension of the Intelligence and didn't seem to really justify a "solo" record. We wanted it to sound a little more like the person...oh, *me*... had lost their mind a little, so we started over. We wrote new songs that were a little more...damaged? Putting it together was a challenge and I think we ended up highlighting the band-aids and that's what gives it some character. Hey, "Make your weakness your strength."



MRR: One of the hackest questions anyone could ask a musician is "what are your influences?" so I'll ask the opposite. What are your anti-influences? What acts do you find so abhorrent you would commit seppuku if someone compared your work to theirs?
Oh, yikes. I would have loved this question ten years ago; now I've gone soft. I'd love to go to town, but it seems too cruel. My anti-influences are recording on computers, not tucking your shirt in, singing without lyrics, singing about how you "don't care" in 2018...wait, actually, I like that. That could be good. "If you don't play a Peavey, I gotta leave-y."

MRR: What made you go soft? Softness is the antithesis of punk! Or are you—gasp—not punk anymore?
Guys, do *not* worry, I'm punk. I still hear about a raunchy house we stayed at I made fun of in a tour journal and the whole town still hates me and I

feel bad. I'm a new kind of punk that holds the hate and disgust inside, creating crows' feet and lower back pain. Our new t-shirt says "Just Molt / Don't Revolt."

MRR: Wait, does that mean you've abandoned the idea of getting t-shirts made that say "Lars" in the Korn font?
No, no, no, I still intend to retire on that idea. I just wasn't going to roast any small fries on the spit.

MRR: Where *do* you want to retire? Florida?
Palm Springs. Sometimes I like how skuzzy Florida is, but it's too humid.

MRR: Yeah, you're from a more temperate yet still oppressively hot climate. Bakersfield, California, specifically. Which you would, stop me if I'm wrong, defend to the death. What are some must-see spots in Bakersfield? Act like you're a tour guide.
You could come to my parents' house and see if my mom will make pizza. If you start acclimating to it in childhood, Mexicali's liquified guacamole is good. I'm shocked a store as great as Going Underground records is here. Buck Owens' Crystal Palace is pretty neat in a "we built a fake western town for under a hundred dollars in a big bar" kinda way. It's actually better than that—his giant silver dollar-covered convertible is behind the bar, it's cool. Front Porch Music is a killer classic guitar shop, and I think you can still smoke in there.

MRR: All right, you sold me on Bakersfield. I'm gonna cash in my non-existent 401k and move there. Sell me on *Moonlight Over Bakersfield* now. Why should I buy a copy for all my loved ones? Who'd you work on it with?
Well, it's relatively inexpensive; we pressed it on the some thinnest vinyl available. It's like a floppy paper or a moth cocoon. I'm kidding. It's normal vinyl, guys. Ahem, it's recorded on analog tape so you can't hear any emails or spam or even a single virus other than maybe foot tap fever. We recorded it at Ty Segall's studio, so there are no rules. Kaanan Tupper from the Intelligence plays the drums and really shines with fancy restraint. Lauren Marie Minkus from Gal Pals sings and plays guitar. Coady Willis from the Melvins and Big Business plays drums on two songs, Mikal Cronin plays saxophone, and Shanna Cleveland from La Luz plays some guitar and sings too.

MRR: OK, so that's *who* worked on *Moonlight Over Bakersfield*; it's a different roster than the other albums, to be sure, since your turnover rate for band members is higher than that of a truck stop Arby's, but how is the record itself *different* from the *others*?
It isn't! I mean, I can see why it doesn't make sense for a "solo" record when the Intelligence is a "solo" project, right? That was one reason for doing it, it doesn't make sense. It's kind of in fashion now but I don't see being super prolific as super sexy. I never planned for the Intelligence to be that but we've been around a long time and if you can't make a record every two years you are a straight up loser. Or you're probably successful. There, I said it. Anyway, the world doesn't deserve a new Intelligence record yet—they didn't even listen to the last one. So now they get *nothing*. OK, be serious. Kaanan and I actually went in the studio and recorded before these sessions with Ty and really liked it but it did sound pretty Intelligence-y and decided it'd be more interesting to write weirder songs and record them weirder too. I think it's a little more intimate, maybe? A little less mean? It's barely mean, even.

MRR: The inclusion of sax on the album is *clutch*. People lose their goddamned minds when Mike plays it live with you guys, too. Why do you reckon more people don't use sax in rock music nowadays? Fear of being associated with the Great Ska Revival of the late '90s?
I'd love to say these '90s kids are afraid of looking like Fishbone, but I bet the honest answer is it's hard to find someone who can really play it and they're expensive. Maybe Danelectro should make a $99 reissue for Guitar Center.

MRR: What else do you find lacking in modern music?
Lyrics about anything, and I mean *anything*. Guitar solos without predictable notes, chord changes you can't guess as soon as they start, true drug problems. Peaveys. Personality, really.

MRR: Well? What do you, Lars Aldric Finberg, intend to do about it?
Just keep our heads down and turn one freak on at a time. I'm thinking about starting our own label to help clog up the pressing plants, keep making boutique punk records, and play Super Bowl 3015, year of the "Musician's Musician."

MRR: Yer own label, eh? Would you just release your own stuff, or other bands' as well?
I'm starting it just for the free demos! Keep 'em coming, folks! Oh, probably just for me. We'll see if it's a disaster.

MRR: Is having your own label the only way to make money in music anymore? Or has making money in music become an impossible dream?
I doubt it's a way to make much money unless you are selling a ton. I think the only way to really make money is the Pepsi commercial route.

MRR: How would your Pepsi jingle go?
"Pepsi, Pepsi, cure my narcolepsy / Pepsi, Pepsi, I don't want no Schweppes, see / Pepsi, Pepsi, are you made by Nestle? / Pepsi, Pepsi, will you be my bestie?"

MRR: What do you say when you order a Coke at a restaurant and the waiter asks "Is Pepsi OK?"
I mean, it's ooookaaaayy.

MRR: *Would* you do a Pepsi jingle if asked? Or do you ascribe to the whole punk "selling out is tantamount to death" ethos?
I'll do anything to anybody for next to nothing.

MRR: Would you do a Donald Trump campaign ad in exchange for a free round of golf at Mar a Lago?
I'd be the house band on the Kathy Griffin talk show if she really cut his head off.

MRR: When's the last time you cried?
Watching *La La Land* the other night. For the third time.

MRR: Gross. Moving on. The early Intelligence records are, frankly, bizarre, the kinda things that would make my grandmother plug her ears and question whether or not you're mentally ill. Your later output is more, for lack of a better word, *normal* (and by "normal," I mean, "straightforward"). Don't get me wrong, my grandmother would still dislike it, but she wouldn't question your sanity upon listening to it. To

what can you attribute this shift?

The earlier records were me playing all the instruments and experimenting more; I guess the last few were written with how the band could shred in mind. You can also meander a little more on record than seems interesting to a live audience. In our case, at least, the more concise rippers work better than the reggae. I think the more we toured and felt what worked and didn't work, we got more normalized. Part of the appeal of doing the solo record was to wipe the dry erase board clean, make the record a little more deranged and figure out how to make the saxophone and theremin mess work out live after it's too late.

MRR: Speaking of *live*, when will the live Intelligence record you recorded in San Francisco last year be released? And how did it come about?

Last I heard it should be out in July. Castle Face Records does a "Live in San Francisco" series and asked us to do one. They use an old Tascam 388 tape machine *[to record albums in the series]*; we recorded in the little basement of our++ friends clothing store Vacation in the Tenderloin. Our drummer Kaanan has the same machine so they let us mix it. I kinda hate live recordings, but I have to admit they did a good job. They've said they're going to put all the banter on a flexi 7" but I honestly can't tell if they are kidding.

MRR: How'd you pick the setlist for the live album? Did you intentionally try and do a career retrospective kinda thing?

Oh, we just jammed. I'm kidding! We mostly played the set from our last tour, which is pretty much career spanning—something from each album. Then later at the merch table when someone asks "Which record did you play most of?" I can just point at whatever we have the most copies of.

MRR: What album do you have the most copies of? By which I mean to say, what album is your least popular?

Actually, I think everything but the last record is out of print, so I guess that one? They were all our least popular at one point!

MRR: Why the hell is every album but the last out of print? You trying to create demand via scarcity?

I don't know! It's up to the label. I guess they sell out, but they don't warrant another pressing? Maybe it's better to have them gone rather than sitting on the shelf? This is the kind of thing I don't like thinking about.

MRR: OK, so what *do* you like thinking about? Generally speaking.

I'm happiest gluing the music together. I like being alone in a room smelling glue. Wait, I mean, I like being alone in a room gluing the music together. I like putting the instruments together, trying to find a way to make something new but still follow the rules. I like when it sounds new and old at the same time. I like when lyrics come easy and are so sad they're funny. I think people don't realize Morrissey is kidding most of the time! My new thing is guitar solos; I had a rule against them forever. They're boring, right?

I like trying to find a way to make such a tired trope interesting. Publicists, release dates, band photos, booking agents, climbing around in the business, most of that I find a mysterious frustration.

MRR: Why were you anti-guitar solo for so long? What made you start doin' 'em?

When I started music, I thought it was a tired tradition to stick in the middle and felt punker to keep the songs brief and eschew the rule book. They mostly sounded like a hokey beep-beep-boing sounding wank around in the pentatonic prison. It seemed like if you didn't like that your other choice was to vigorously scraggle the strings noisily which seemed tired too. At the time, the A-Frames were going side by side and they did them—surprisingly to good effect—so it seemed like another way to try to sound separate. We didn't do them for so long, it seemed fresh or at least funny when I started trying them, and now it's a fun curveball to try to make them sing. I don't know scales or notes, so it takes hours to pick out, which gives me something to do. Doesn't that sound fun to listen to? "Guys, check it out, this took *forever*!"

MRR: You say it felt "punker" to eschew the rules...what else did you used to do that could be classified as "punk" but no longer do?

I didn't floss, maybe that was more lazy than punk. Didn't tuck my shirt in, it looks better tucked in.

MRR: How do you feel about the state of modern punk?

There seems to be some good modern punk. I love Institute, Total Control, Ex-Cult...three is a lot, right? There doesn't seem to be anyone big ripping up the streets like Sublime was, but that's probably good for the cycle. It's ready to anoint a new queen.

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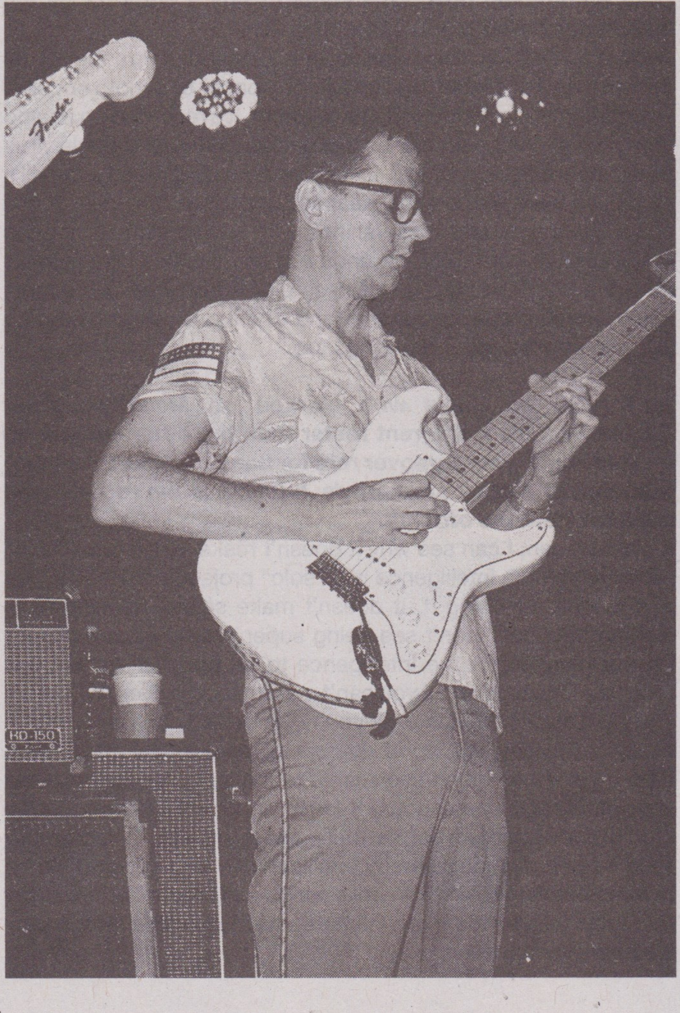

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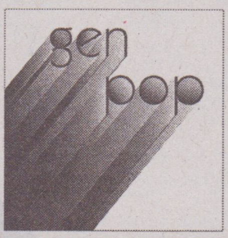

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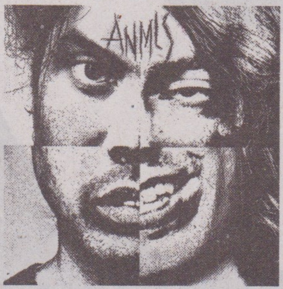

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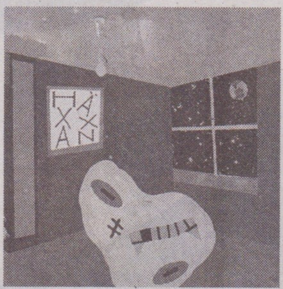

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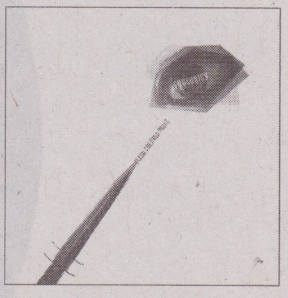

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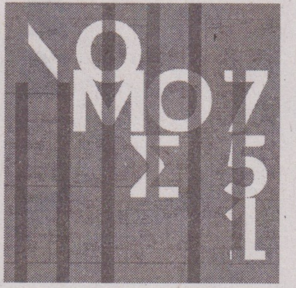

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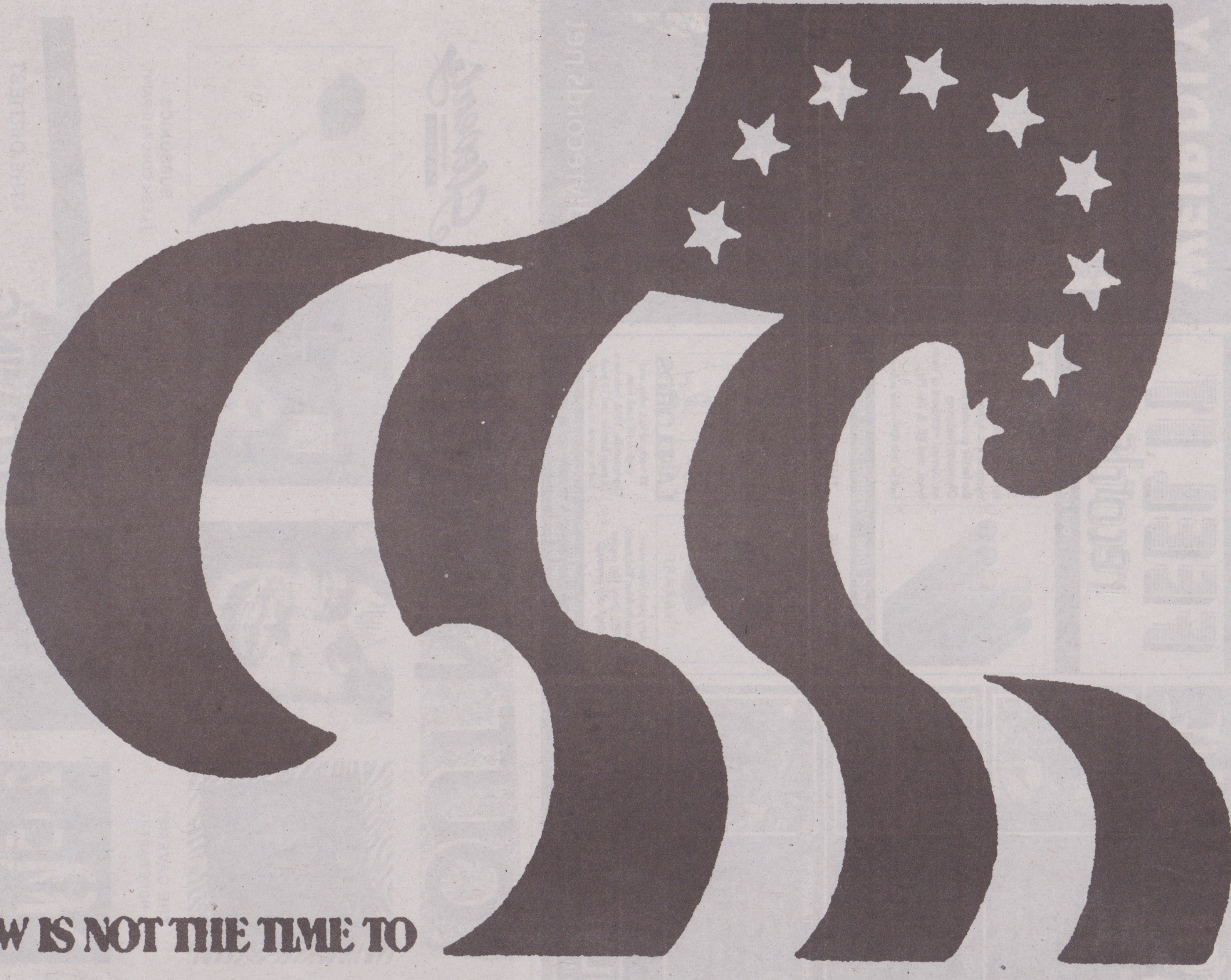

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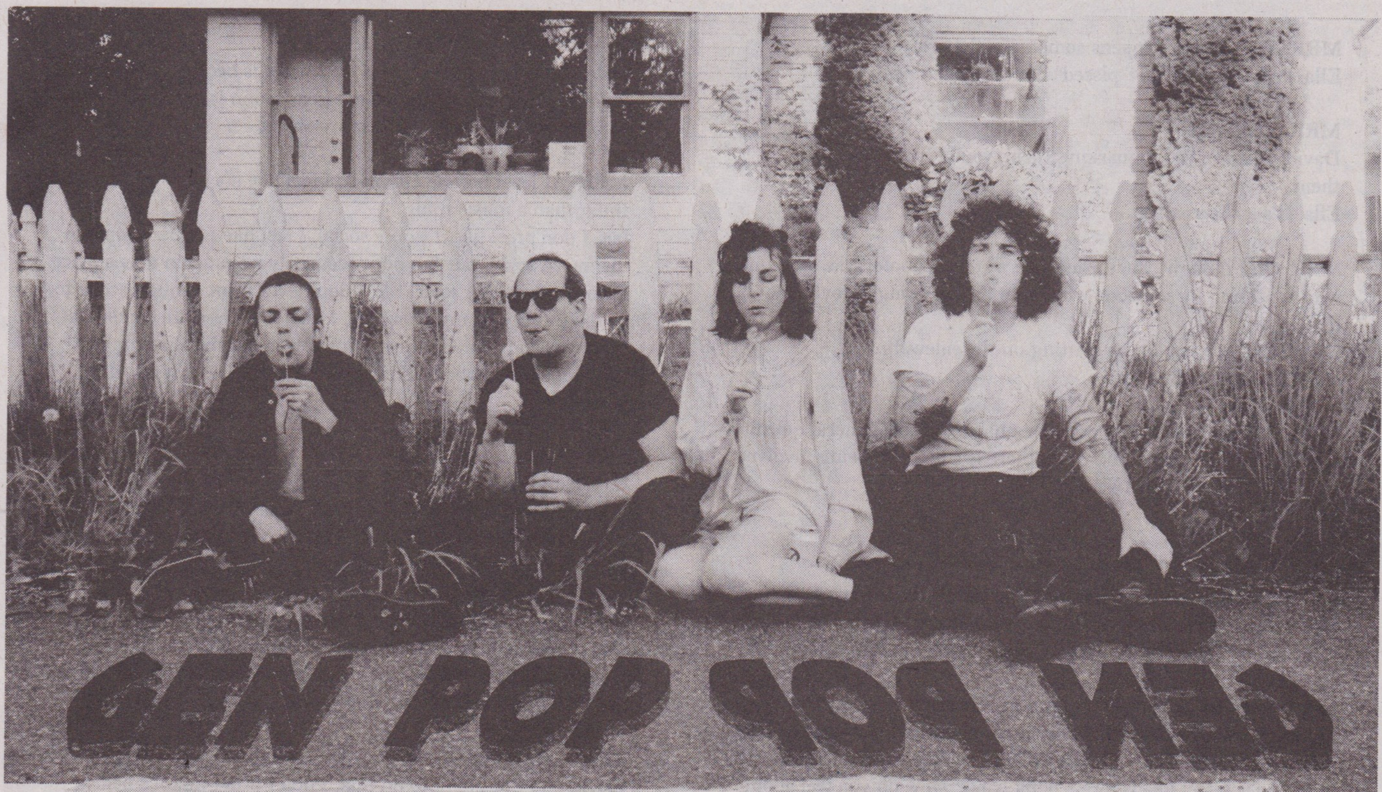

Jake Gulliver, owner and curator of Stucco inc, was kind enough to sit down with Gen Pop and chit chat about punk, accessibility, cosplay, and hickeys. Photos by Kentaro Murai and Jake Gulliver.

MRR: Who is the Gen Pop?
Ian: Gen Pop are...
David: Our cousin Glenn.

MRR: WHO IS THE GEN POP?!
Ian: Ian (guitar)
Gabriel: Gabriel (bass)
David: David (drums)
Ella: Ella (guitar)

MRR: That's a good foot to start on...
David: You should start off at that point, knowing our names. Don't even say them, though.

MRR: No, are there other Gen Poppers or no?
Ian: Yeah, there was Theo and Mary Jane. We had other members before, but they've moved on to different places

MRR: Greener pastures.
Ian: Theo moved to L.A. That is more like browner pastures. MJ is in a glass pasture. But yeah, metaphorical greener pastures.

MRR: Are you guys still going to play their songs?
Ian: That Theo and MJ wrote?

MRR: Yeah! Totally.
David: I think we can do it, I believe in us.

MRR: Were you in different bands before forming Gen Pop?
Gabriel: I sing in Lysol and have an electronic music project called American Nudism.
David: Before moving to Olympia, I played with a couple of hardcore groups called Chemos and the MPK. Most recently, I've been playing with Rik & the Pigs and Very Mental.
Ella: I also currently play in Table Sugar.
Ian: I played in Vipe, Vexx, and play in Combat Knife still.

MRR: [To Gabriel] Can you play fast?
Gabriel: I can play fast.
Ian: I think anyone with a hickey on their neck can play fast.
Gabriel: Do I have a hickey on my neck? Goddamn.
Ella: I think it's just lipstick, how could you get a hickey evenly shaped like that?

MRR: It's too bold to be a hickey.
Ian: I was talking to a parent the other day at the school I work at, and she had so many hickeys on her neck.
Ella: My mom had a hickey on her neck in her driver's license from like 30–40.
David: That's awesome.
Ella: It is, to this day, the biggest hickey I've ever seen.
David: It would have to be to be visible on a driver's license.
Ella: She said she was walking around the street feeling so cool when she got it.
Ian: That is such a funny rebellious thing to do, have a hickey.

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MRR: Yeah, it just happens sometimes though.
Ella: People get kind of pissed about it sometimes.

MRR: Yeah, why?
David: Because you're marking them, you're literally marking them.
Ella: It's embarrassing.

MRR: Oh I thought you meant, like, outside people. Like someone who is passing by someone who has a hickey going, "Hey! What is that!"
David: Like it's as rude as spitting on the sidewalk.
Ella: Yeah, cover that up.

MRR: You can't walk around with a hickey. I have general question for the general pop, do you think there is a point to being involved in DIY and punk in 2018?
Ian: Yeah, sure.

MRR: Why? Or to what end?
Ian: Because if you're not going to do it, who is, and what the fuck else is anyone else doing with their time that's better? I feel like what the hell else are we going to do, and why not do something?

MRR: It's kind of annoying when people are hella reductive with it, like people say it's just cosplay or something. I feel like you guys play a bunch of different kinds of music. Do you guys feel that way? Do you feel like you're a punk band? How do you feel about the band in general?
Ian: I like to have fun and do what I want with music.
Ella: I don't really think about being a punk band. That just isn't something I think about. Not in a bad way, it's just not something I think about.
Gabriel: I'm down with cosplay though, but not in this sense.

MRR: I feel like a lot of people are like "there's no point in doing this shit anymore because at this point because it is just cosplay..."
Gabriel: Are these people even going to shows?

MRR: I don't know.
Ian: I think those type of people are people who, when they were younger and they got exposed to "punk," it was really important to them, and it has a meaning that was maybe replacing something religious or some other void inside themselves. And then when "punk" or the "music scene" doesn't live up to their expectations, and they get older and they're disappointed, they project that onto kids and people that they're around.
Gabriel: Or they have an idea of what it is because you're not involved in it, and when you get involved in it, it is still tied into the parts of your life that are shitty.

MRR: At least here in Olympia, I feel like it's more of a social thing than a music thing.
Ian: I don't feel like it's only social, I feel like I know people in the music scene, but I'm not necessarily invested in it as a place for me to have my social life. I don't ever want a music scene to be the totality of my social life. I like that there are bands that I enjoy with people in them I don't even like, but listening to their music isn't about liking them. I don't know, it's nothing personal.

MRR: Any current bands?
Ian: [laughter]
David: I don't mind it being social. I like the idea of songwriting as a conversation. I like hearing that in artists I listen to, and it's fun to participate in that dialogue.

MRR: Do you feel like your songs do that?
David: Yes and no. I think that writing is a way of digesting what you've been listening to on top of being a dialogue. There are really obvious ways of doing that, which feel like cosplay.

MRR: Like what? Name drop some people...
David: I'm not going to do that, I don't think that it's bad.

MRR: They're just here for the free ride.
David: Yeah it's just fun, it's fun to play.
Ian: Yeah, because punk and hardcore and guitar rock is all genre. When genres are constructed, they have something that is speaking out from a culture. And then to try to go too far from what constituted the genre in the first place is the pickle that punk and hardcore got in during the early 2000s, except in major cities. It was like, "I'm going to take what little I know about funk and jazz and the Rolling Stones, but also, like, punk and grindcore and noise music, and now I make a band." It was horrible, it sucked.

MRR: With so many popular bands coming from Olympia over the years, do you feel as though there's a preconceived notion of what being a punk / a punk band is in Olympia? If so, do you feel as though you conform to those ideas?
Ella: The reputation here is funny and it's easy to get sucked into it. The music that I play has helped me find my way

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through that idea of what punk is here. I find that I am often pushing it away while also thriving within it.
Gabriel: No, anyone who thinks there is an "Olympia Sound" is probably out of touch. There is a huge variety in the scene here, and if you look at popular bands from Olympia recently, like Broken Water, Vexx, Gag, Milk Music, etc., the only thing tying them together is that they all play their own way, which can be said about any good band.
Ian: Yeah, there definitely is a reputation. One of them is sort of sloppy do-what-you-want punk and the other is really political identity-centric punk. I feel like the latter affects what I do very little. Sometimes I like to write about my identity; sometimes I don't. If people have an assumption of punk Oly, I usually am okay with it? Unless the people think that I'm an authority on ethics and stuff. I don't know, I'm just trying to stay in my lane and keep it right. Musically, I don't think we're conforming to anything coming from Olympia, especially historically. Except for maybe a freedom to mangle genres and sing amateurishly over it. Olympia has always encouraged that.

MRR: How did you decide what style of punk you wanted to play? Did you have any specific aesthetic goal in mind, and if so, what lead you to choose that goal?
David: I really like the rhythm bit of music, and to press that is wonderful. Playing with different rhythms and trying to find the ways in which they are related. What is the source? I want to find the source. I imagine it's a now-empty bag that once held some kind of special white powder with only desirable properties. Maybe you'll switch on a light and find us all licking the walls of the inside of that bag, begging with our tongues for a trace of its contents.
Gabriel: I only recently joined the band so my decision was easy. I like to play like Gen Pop.
Ian: We all like a lot of music, but we focused on playing high energy music. High tension, high energy music is a driving force in my opinion. That and trying to find good melodic resolutions that please us. You know, stuff like Swell Maps, but also Sodom from Japan, high energy music with melodic resolutions that are interesting. I want to play something that makes my body feel good.
Ella: We all come from different backgrounds of playing, and I think that allows us to play around and communicate with our instruments in a unique way.

MRR: Do you think there are any original ideas left in punk anymore?
David: I love the idea, but I truly believe we are not an idea.
Gabriel: I think that ideas are like cells replicating: eventually one of the perfect copies gets mutated and fucked up and some new freak cell is born.
Ella: I guess that's not something I think about. I think originality just happens on a whim. It's a happy accident or the way things fall into place. So yeah, I think there are original ideas left in punk. Especially because it seems that punk is changing in a lot of ways, and it's cool to be a part of that.
Ian: I think originality and authenticity are ways that style can transform technique and tradition. Doing things sideways or drawing inspiration from disparate styles and putting them in context of a playing technique can create the idea of originality.

MRR: I read some Gen Pop record reviews and they are say that you're doing the punk genre but a little bit off.
Ian: Yeah, we're like Danny Boyle, is that his schtick?
Gabriel: Yeah, the guy who did Trainspotting.
Ian: Yeah, we're doing genre music but, you know, it's our band.

MRR: So you're a genre band?
Ian: Yeah, totally. You can't play with drums, two guitars, and a bass and not be a genre band.

MRR: Do you guys agree with that?
David: Yeah, we're a boutique rock band.
Ian: What is the preoccupation with people and being "groundbreaking" or something? I mean, it happens once every blue moon, but just working on playing and writing is what I think we focus on.

MRR: What, like the whole "why be normal" attitude?
Ian: I don't know, just that feeling of having to be extremely unique.
Gabriel: Because people don't want to be like that shirt with the stick figures on it that is like "you're just like everybody else," man.
Ian: Yeah, like that shirt that says "You're Cool," and under it in parenthesis it says "(I'm being sarcastic)."

MRR: I think there is a certain group of people who feel that way.
David: I think we're the greatest band in the world. [laughter]

MRR: Oh shit, I bet that's going to be in the headline. "We're the greatest band in the world."
David: A shining star that every American should fixate on.

MRR: Why?
David: No reason!

MRR: Just because we need somebody?
David: No, because they need somebody.

MRR: Well how are they going to find your music?
David: We're still working that out with the labels. [laughter]
Gabriel: What do we have to do, get on NPR or something?

MRR: I mean, so much shit isn't easy to find and isn't accessible to people, intentionally. It's kind of annoying.
Ian: Where I land is that I would like for people to hear it, but I know that people probably aren't going to enjoy most of it. It brings me back to you asking if this is a social thing. I think that is why yes, DIY punk and genre music turns into a social thing because the group of people into it or doing it is so small. And I think...

MRR: I'm sorry, Ian.
Ian: What?

MRR: There is a guy flying a drone at the bar.
Ian: It's okay.

MRR: This bar is wacko.
Ella: Look at his face, the guy who is flying it, he's so pleased with himself.
Gabriel: What was your question?

MRR: It wasn't really a question, I was just saying that I feel like people are really preoccupied with making punk and other music underground inaccessible in a way that excludes young people.
Gabriel: Every so often you'll see a wave of young people show up at shows. Not a lot of them, but a few.
Ella: I think it's a small town thing.

MRR: Do you like being a band here?
Ian: In Olympia?
Gabriel: Do I like it? I guess it's a fine place to be a band

MRR: Would you rather be a band somewhere else? Because I feel like Olympia is this place where people hear about it and move here and don't stay, but make stuff while they're here.
Ian: Well, I moved here because of my family. My mom and dad are from Washington and Idaho, so I moved here because of that.

MRR: Yeah, but you stayed here.
Ian: Mostly because I don't feel like there is anywhere worth it to go in America. I'm like "Oh I could go to this big city and pay a lot of people I don't know and see a bunch of shit that I could go see on vacation." I don't know, if I'm gonna move it'll be out of the USA.
Ella: It's getting expensive here.
David: Food is expensive.

MRR: And it's not even good!
Gabriel: That's why you gotta make it yourself.
David: Even the food at the grocery store is expensive.
Ian: Home style cooking!
Gabriel: Before every practice, we make a home cooked meal, biscuits and gravy
David: Tomorrow is gravy day.

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Ella: Gravy day?
Ian: I don't know how we get out of this not looking stupid. I feel like all interviews are humiliation
Gabriel: So far Jake has asked questions that are relevant to the band. One time I was interviewed and asked what the most embarrassing thing my parents caught me doing...
Ian: Masturbating.
Gabriel: That's what I said!
Ian: That is the most embarrassing thing I've ever caught my parents doing. Well they were having sex.
Ella: I'll never forget when I heard my parents having sex for the first time and I thought my mom was getting hurt. I wanted to go to their room and ask her if she was okay, which I did. Then they yelled at me to go and I went into my room and was like, "oh shit."
Gabriel: I feel like hearing it is worse than walking in on it.
Ian: I always knew to leave when I saw a leather belt over my parents doorknob, like "go outside, you're not going to want to hear this." They'd go in there at like seven and wouldn't come out again.
Ella: Oh god.

MRR: Wow.
Gabriel: Sounds like you could do anything you wanted to.
Ian: Yeah, it made sneaking out a lot easier.
David: One time I tried to sneak out of my room.
Gabriel: Recently?
David: No, my parents caught me and I pretended I was asleep.

MRR: Is there anything else you want to say?
David: Gen Pop I is out on Upset the Rhythm and Lumpy Records. Gen Pop II is now out on Feel It Records.
Ian: We're going on tour to the midwest and East Coast this June, come hang out.

Come see Gen Pop play!

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June 5th – Kansas City
June 6th – St. Louis
June 7th – Indianapolis
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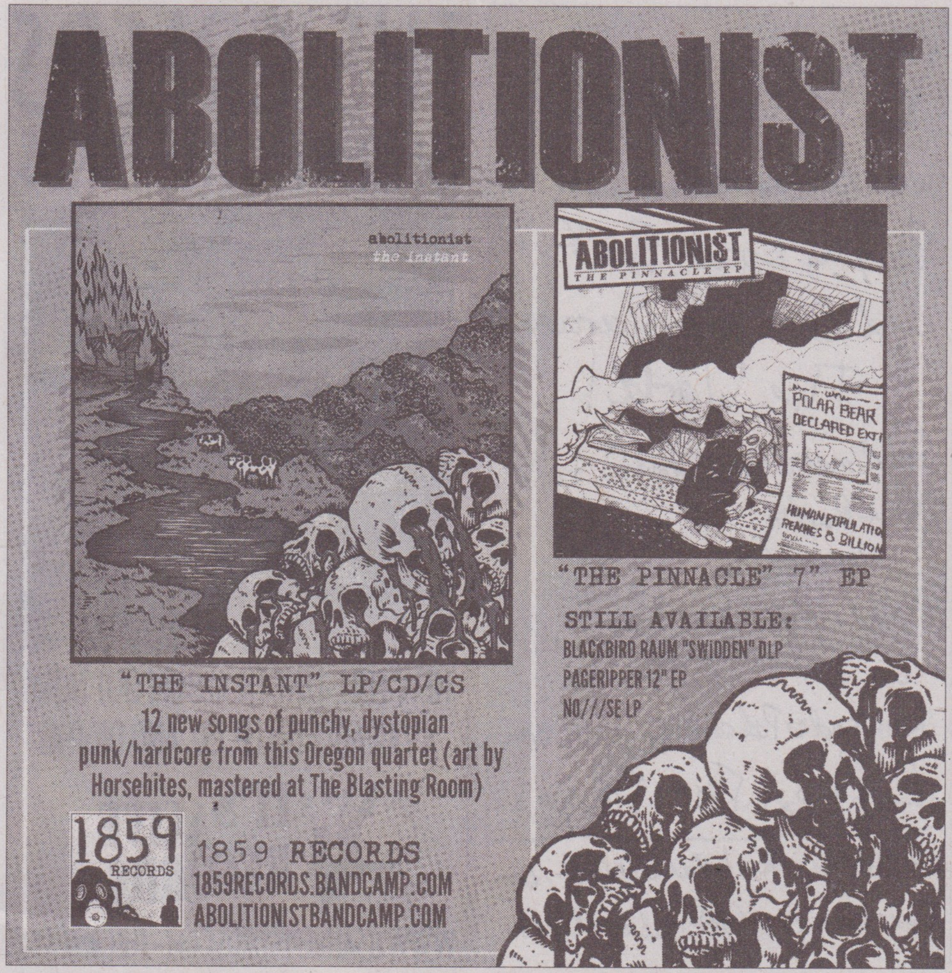
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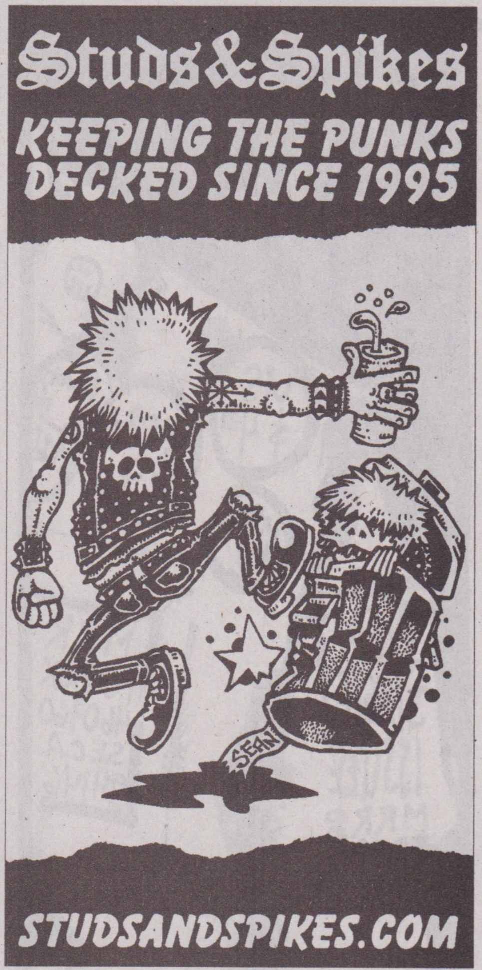
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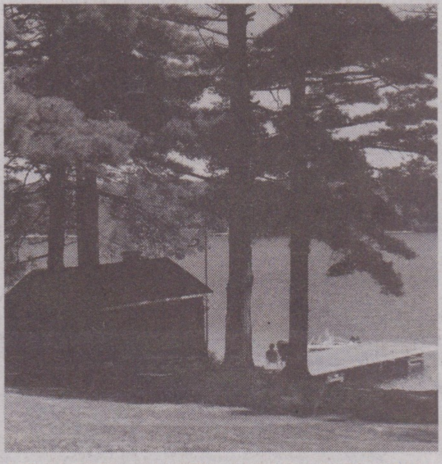

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MURO

In the wake of a shaky peace treaty between government and guerrilla after years of war, and a Western pop culture which gets more and more obsessed with the country's history of cocaine and white collar crime, a pack of rats are trying to shake the foundations of this US-aligned, right wing South American country. When Muro is not spewing hard-hitting hardcore punk from their headquarters in the Bogotá sewers, they're busy making screen prints for art exhibitions, booking national and international bands for tours lasting several weeks and scraping together money enough for the local bands to tour Europe. With their ripping debut record Ataque Hardcore Punk out, brutally direct both in title and sound, Muro demands your attention right here, right now.

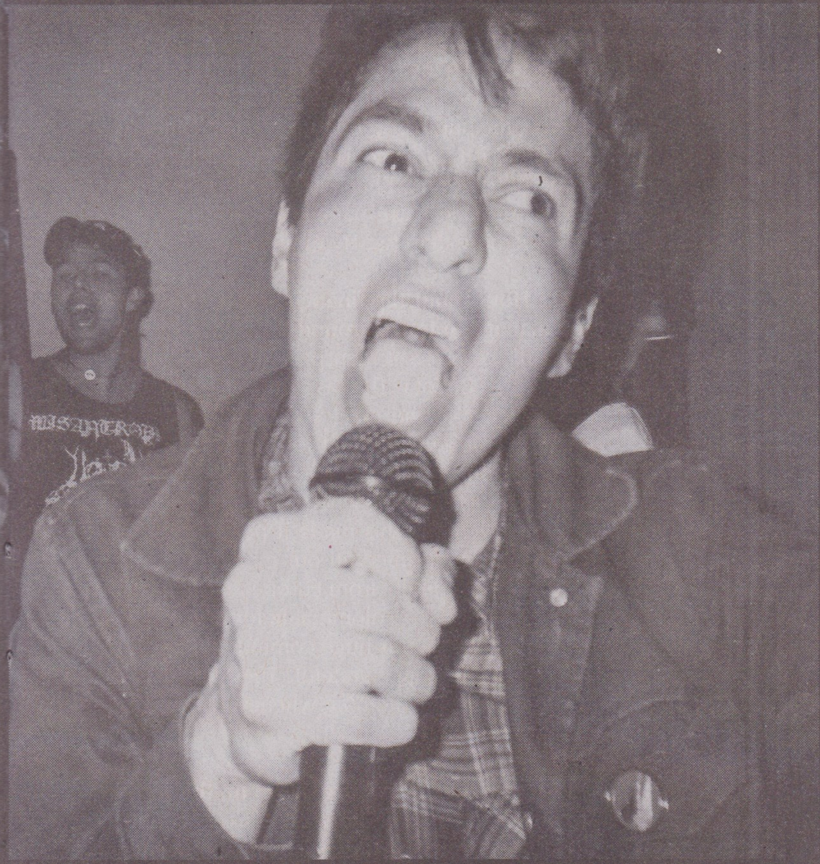
Introduction and interview by Erik J. Egenes.

Photos by Juan B. Cano and Carlota Vesga.

MRR: Tell us about the beginnings of Muro. How and when did you start the band?

We have all played in bands together before, but mainly we all work in the same place. But this isn't one of those bands people just do with their office co-workers. Muro is a big priority in our lives, as well as the place we work in. We all have played different styles of punk, '77 punk as well as more extreme styles.

What we really had in common, though, is a shared taste for the worldwide hardcore punk of the '80s and the idea behind it. That exact moment when punk stopped being a pop phenomenon supported by the mainstream media, labels, and concert venues, and instead turned into an autonomous artistic and political movement, breaking out of the natural cycle of rock vanguards. After five years, it again became disposable material for corporations and people started to do their own parallel circuits, and that's the reason why we think punk is still important and can still be something else than just a cosplay nostalgic retro fashion.



MRR: Muro is, as you say, affiliated with the Rat Trap collective in Bogotá—what is the connection between the two?

Muro is a band rooted in the Rat Trap collective. All the members have been part of it for years and play different roles in the project.

It's hard to define the Rat Trap collective, as the conditions and the context have determined the course along the way. It started as a punk house around May 2012—the idea was to serve the punk community with a place to set up shows, art exhibitions, social and political activities and to provide equipment and knowledge of production through punk ethics. In Bogotá, squatting has never been a possibility, as Colombia is maybe the country with closest ties to the US. Both here and there, private property is a big thing, so we have always paid rent.

This made it nearly impossible to attach to the international punk community, but it also opened our eyes to new opportunities, through which we have met wonderful people. People who have the spirit that we were looking for in the punk community and who get hazed by the party, drugs and violence—though all of them are important in adequate doses for keeping it indigestible for the mainstream.

Rat Trap is also a part of bigger collectives, such as Fuerza Punk, who do booking for bands willing to tour Colombia and abroad. It also has a strong connection to the Oasis collective, which works around queer culture and activism. There is also a new label, Fuerza Ingobernable, that so far has released the compilation *Fuerza Ingobernable I*, also available from Byllepest Distro. Fuerza has also released a split record of our favorite band in Latin America—Ignorantes from Chile—and the great band Endiondo, from Chile / Perú.

We pay our bills by screenprinting, so we can keep the music and activism unattached to the money. There's a big workshop where people may use the printing service and learn how to print themselves. The screenprinting service also allows us to create the spiritual dimension and graphic universe behind the whole idea of Rat Trap.

MRR: Byllepest Distro, your label here in Norway, described Muro as "the underdog biting back against borders, both in our minds and in society around us." What is it like to be a band from Colombia that tours internationally?

It feels great! We have learned a lot from the international punk community. We have only toured once internationally, but we have traveled many times with international bands through different cities and towns in Colombia. By doing this we have learned about European hospitality and discipline, we have learned about fun and great performances of US bands, we have learned about solidarity, humbleness, and rawness from South American bands.

We think it's such a maturing experience for bands to travel. You make yourself vulnerable when you are in someone's hands in a country where you don't know anybody or even speak the language, when there's no other possibility but to trust strangers, who give you the keys to their house while they go to work so you can rest a little. Many of the members of bands that are related to us have learned the English language while touring, have broadened their political views and perspective, their sound, their artistic approach to music, have learned the importance of cooking for others. For many, it's also the only chance to get out of this country.

Sometimes people think their world is smaller than others', that they were born in the wrong place, that they are born to lose, or are condemned to watch the bands they like through the internet. But, somehow, the punk community makes these boundaries smaller.

For us, Europe and South America are our only possible destinations at the moment due to visa issues, but we would really like to visit as many countries as possible. We always travel with a huge screenprinting exhibition and try to take as much material from Colombian bands as possible to share with audiences, so if there is any crazy punk reading this who wants us to play in their country, we can make it work. Let's talk!

MRR: How did you handle the border controls?

We haven't needed a visa to go to Europe for the last two years, but we were still really scared. We asked for bank loans and money from friends, so our bank balance looked decent during background checks. Still, we toured with only 240 Euros (800,000 Colombian pesos) each for more than a month. All the work of us and others to make the tour happen could have been ruined. But in the end, it went OK. They asked us what the purpose of our trip was, and after we told them it was for tourism, they just let us in. Some of us got held back for a longer time and had to provide more papers, but in the end it was not more than twenty minutes.

MRR: How about the financial costs? How did you manage to travel around?

As said, we run a screen printing workshop at Rat Trap in Bogotá. The last few years we have gotten better in the craft, so we get to print a lot of art for galleries and museums. We have been running the place for six years, but last year was the first one where we actually got a regular paycheck. This made it possible to buy the tickets. We printed all our merch here, and borrowed equipment from European friends that had visited us in Colombia before. We were just supported by this huge community, towards whom we are super grateful. They know they have a house in Colombia whenever they want to visit or play.

MRR: In popular culture here in the West, Colombia is usually presented as a country dominated by drug cartels and many decades

of guerrilla warfare. Is this image in any way correct?
It is, but certainly being a centralist country has made a huge division between rural and urban context. Bogotá, where we are based, is a big city with a population of 8 million where there is a lot of crime and violence—both street and domestic—but the urban crime is certainly quite different from the violence suffered in the rural areas. There, the state has no presence, or if there is a presence at all, it is the military.

As you may have read, last year some peace agreements with the FARC guerrilla were signed, they laid down their weapons and began a process for thousands of guerrilla members to reconnect with the civilian life. After this, deaths have decreased in the thousands, as combat is not a daily thing anymore. Unfortunately, there are too many interests between traditional politicians, real estate moguls, drug cartels, paramilitary groups, and organized crime. This network maintains a frustrating atmosphere around politics, which stands in the way of a hope of change.

But this is all terrible marketing. We want people to come and visit, so depending on your interests there's a lot to visit here without being traditional tourists. Maybe get involved with issues where you may help out. Beautiful landscapes, great punk gigs, great variety of fruits and vegetables, good weather, cheap street food, and people thirsty to hear new bands and to share ideas.

MRR: For us non-Spanish-speaking listeners: what are your lyrics about?
Expensive cities, miserable minimum wage, no spare time, long shifts, sexist environments that we have been part of, competition, cruelty, hate, preachers that do the same things they say are wrong, limitations, visions of progress where you have no place, cynical leaders, frustration, innocent people killed in nonsense conflicts being considered collateral damage, failures in leftist political models, superficial rebellion, instrumentalization of discourses for making people's personalities more interesting and not by real empathy, lives that are not worth to live.

We really believe that politics are made in daily life. Any attempt of change in social macrostructures for us seems impossible, coming from a country with 70 years of war, where there has never been a leftist government, only right and far right, and where we don't feel represented by any leftist guerrilla or party because all the good ones have been killed. We are trying to build a scenario that we like and that makes sense to our context.

MRR: Is the scene in European countries any different from the scene in Colombia?
The scene in Europe is quite more organized. The struggle of squatting since the '80s and '90s, the political commitment and disciplined work—you can see this immediately when you come to Europe. It creates an atmosphere that makes you think that everything might be possible. Also there are a lot of record labels, venues, studios, equipment, circuits and hundreds of collectives working to create an awesome network that we really admire—but maybe this is just an impression we might have as we are "tourists."

Here in Colombia it's different. Not bad, just a different way than in Europe. One of the good aspects is that there are hundreds of young punks. Internet has made everything more accessible—not just music, but ideas as well. Being a punk in the '80s and '90s was tough worldwide. Colombia is not an exception, especially combined with the most intense years of violence. This created an atmosphere of cruelty, extreme violence, gang life and military hierarchy where punks had to unite towards society.

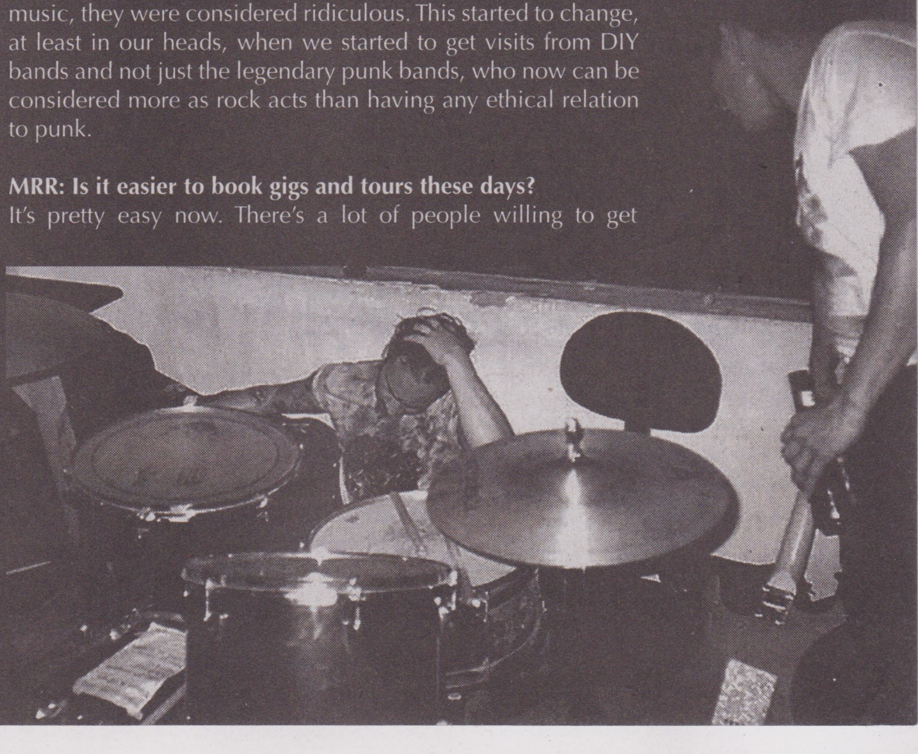
Musically, Colombia is now kind of similar to Germany. Lots of D-beat and crust bands, some political hardcore *à la* From Ashes Rise, lots of street punk similar to "deutsch punk." Younger punks playing '80s post-punk, hardcore punk, and experimental music. Still, there are definitely some bands who are trying to bring their own identity, trying to get as far away as possible from the easy formulas of the predominant hype bands.

MRR: Some of you have been a part of the hardcore scene for a long time, in bands like Ceache. Have the dynamics in the hardcore community changed over the years?
In the '80s a lot of records were released, but compared to neighbors as Brasil or Perú, there were not that many. In the '90s, people got more anti-fashion and radical in their views of how the underground should be, so a lot of the material from this period are home recordings done with "journalist-y" recording devices. Most of this are probably in the shelves of old radical punks, and we will never get to hear these jewels.

Access to music has been limited, not only because of geographical boundaries, but also because somehow music recordings were people's treasures. A record came and one person bought it or stole it. Then the rest just bootlegged it, did their best drawing of the original art, praised it, and mostly didn't share it with younger punks.

Then, from the mid 1990s to the 2000s, Spanish punk became almost the only thing Bogotá punks got to hear. With music comes ideas, and following this, many Bogotá bands got inspired by the Spanish style and it was really a predominant sound for a while. Everything became a little static, and maybe closer to a rock identity than a punk one. If people had a political ideology or an artistic approach towards music, they were considered ridiculous. This started to change, at least in our heads, when we started to get visits from DIY bands and not just the legendary punk bands, who now can be considered more as rock acts than having any ethical relation to punk.

MRR: Is it easier to book gigs and tours these days?
It's pretty easy now. There's a lot of people willing to get



involved in making tours happen. It can be hard to make money if it isn't a band people already know of, but internal transportation, a place to sleep, and wild shows are guaranteed. People don't buy that much merch, but we try to pay as much as possible each time. Unfortunately, the exchange rate is not that favorable for foreign bands. Equipment is acquired from the organizers in every city, and bands may borrow instruments from locals if needed. We usually rent a huge bus for 20-40 people and pack it with two local bands and some enthusiasts, so a packed show is always guaranteed in smaller towns. We think that is one of the most special things about touring Colombia. The hard part right now is that, as more and more bands show interest to come, it's not easy for us to take leave from our jobs all the time. But if tours are planned right, they can turn out great.

MRR: Is it easier to get your records distributed internationally?
It used to be almost impossible, as shipping is extremely expensive, but fortunately we are not invisible anymore in the international punk community because great labels like Byllepest Distro from Norway and MMM Discos have done a great job spreading the word about us.

MRR: How connected are Muro and the Rat Trap collective to the international hardcore community?
Our band is a pretty eclectic mix itself, taking into account we come from different parts of Bogotá and different towns in Colombia. Our ages are in between 24 and 38, so our relationship has been built by the years.

In 2001, our singer Darcy started Paranoica Distro. Through this distro, he exchanged titles with distros in Germany, Spain, Perú, Chile, Argentina, and the US. As you mentioned, he also sang in the hardcore-become-grindcore band Ceache from Ibague, Colombia from 1998–2007, and has always been active in setting up shows for local bands. Actually, he booked a show with one of the bands of younger members of Muro in 2007, which was the first time some of us met. Then, in 2012, we opened Rat Trap together and started to build new relationships with the international punk scene.

In 2013 we participated in our first tour with an international band through Colombia, along with San Francisco's Ruleta Rusa. It was a totally disastrous, yet super fun tour. We got our brand new Focusrite eight-channel interface, two kits of microphones, and a computer we bought on credit stolen after just using it for one recording. The last show was ruined by an asshole who broke the brow bone of someone in the first band while the cops were coming in. We had to set up a new show the following Monday, and had only earned 30 dollars from the other shows in the other cities. In our heads it's an awesome memory, but that was definitely the worst day in our lives.

From that tour we grew a really close friendship with the guys in Ruleta Rusa, especially with Josh from MMM Discos. Many people owe it to him that they know about many contemporary punk bands from Colombia. He has co-released, set up US, tours and distributed records for Secta, Dead Hero, Final, Primer Regimen and Muro. We are gonna show them all what we have learned these years. Institute from Texas will also come back this May.

We also did a tour with Flykills from New York here in Colombia. That tour was really groundbreaking as their sound is really unique, or at least it was at the time. I think it was the first time Dani from Dead Hero understood that the UK82 sound he was looking for had a lot to do with a chorus pedal. Every time a band comes to visit, bands here get better.

We were also part of the Generacion Suicida tour to support the Fuerza Punk Collective, and we have set up tours with Malkio and Parasytes from Montréal. We love them and we're very grateful, especially to Janick, who gave a band from our gang the chance to travel on an international tour for the first time. For most of us, it was the first time travelling out of Colombia, and for some even the first time on an airplane. Isn't punk a cool thing? It's probably the first time everybody's parents didn't think it was the worst curse that had happened to their kids.

We almost killed Glue from Texas on tour in Colombia in 2016. The brakes of our car broke and we were heading straight for a pit of trucks in an intersection. Our drummer Rafa acted fast and hauled us in between a big sidewalk and a parked bus. The people in Glue are awesome, no matter what German punks say! They were so humble and understanding, and resumed the tour without giving a shit about the accident with the brakes. Their gig in Bogotá was so sick. Check it out online.

Glue shares members with Institute, who are coming back here this year. So we guess there is something pretty cool and haunting about touring through this piece of land, forgotten by God. They did some serious damage on the brains of those in the crowd who believed that punk is just tupa-tupa rhythms and growls, along with Rakta from São Paulo. We have a really good relationship with some punks over in São Paulo, like the techno punks in Meia Vida and the Rolo Seco collective, who we set up an exhibition with at Rat Trap last year. Their posters are as powerful as they are cheap!

We have also set up exhibitions for Alexander Heir (who also did the cover for Secta on their split with Dead Hero), Sam Ryser, Lisa Czech, Mateus Acioli—"big" names in punk art. We are very thankful for them all having taken their time to come and share everything they know with us.

Last year we shared the stage with some Mallorca punks who we met when we set up Orden Mundial's Colombian tour. It was awesome to tour with one of our only actual sound inspirations. They set up us a show in Palma and Marti, their bassist, replaced our bassist during the European tour. He also came with one of his new bands, Puñal, who also toured Colombia starting this year. We participated as part of Fuerza Punk Collective at the Suicidas show in Bogotá. A couple of weeks ago Schwach form Germany played in our place. We really hope we help as much bands and artists to have a great time and have worthwhile experiences while visiting us.

During the tour we fell in love with some new Scandinavian bands like Junta, Zyfillis, Snör (the best punk band in the world), Glorious?—and of course our siblings Negativ from Oslo, who we toured with and are the best band we saw live on our tour. Members of Negativ run Byllepest Distro, who released our LP and set up all our dates in Scandinavia. We are working together in the packaging, printing, and sometimes art of all the new releases of the Byllepest label and we feel great to be part of it.

How connected are Muro and the Rat Trap collective to the Colombian music industry?
The Colombian music industry is closed to everything but reggaeton and tropical music. Some shitty Nickelback imitators form the rock quota. Except for some classics in afrobeat, salsa, and tropical genres, we don't really care that much about Colombian music industry. In the independent music sector, however, we provide a lot of printing and sometimes live sound services and rental of rehearsing rooms. We also have a close relationship with the experimental music scene, especially with Matik Matik—one of the few places that opens their doors for punk acts. They are the home of many crazy bands, like Los Pirañas and Rompe Rayo.

We also have a good relationship with Asilo bar, a music venue from the '80s where the more known bands we set up shows for usually play. There are small DIY record stores, collectives, and other places that we like, and lots of people are working to continue with an autonomous cultural "industry." We will make a list of some, sorted by interest. We hope nobody that deserves recognition is left out:

For more info on Muro and the Rat Trap Collective go to facebook.com/casarattrap

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Asilo

C/SITE RECORDINGS

Interview by Miranda Fisher. *Photographs by Dave Hyde and Stefan Christensen.*

In just two years since its inception in 2016, C/Site has quickly become one of the most consistently interesting labels in America. Its purview is difficult to narrow down with any specificity; releases run the gamut from psychedelic music to post-punk to noise, and while special attention is given to label leader Stefan Christensen's hometown of New Haven, artists released on the label hail from all over the world. The common threads tying it all together are its DIY values and the musicians' willingness to push boundaries, a lack of the complacency that drags down so many contemporary labels.

C/Site's move from cassettes to vinyl releases began with a 2017 reissue of the Welsh post-punk band Reptile Ranch, whose interview in Maximum Rocknroll #408*, conducted by Stefan, is a must-read. Its second LP release was a solo album by Christensen himself, which made a handful of year-end top 10 lists here at MRR (including my own), soon followed by a 7" split with Rob Noyes and Alexander. The transition to vinyl releases brought with it an enhanced, cohesive aesthetic: C/Site's art is minimal, but with careful, handmade details.*

Two years in, then, C/Site is unquestionably a label worth paying attention to. Over the phone, Stefan spoke with me about the label's origins, intentions, and future, as well as how it all ties in with his current solo music and his past work in the more straightforward Estrogen Highs. That sounds like a lot, but, well, there was a lot to say! Read on for more.

MRR: Let's get started by talking about how C/Site started. Do you want to tell me the general story?
Yeah, there's not that much to it. It was actually me and my friend Jules. He was involved in the beginning, getting it started, but the basic idea was just to start off doing cassettes to hopefully build some sort of foundation and from there be able to do vinyl releases. So we started off just doing local New Haven-related stuff and then reaching out to friends and people we've known, just doing a handful of cassettes at a time. And we did that for a little while. Jules actually stepped back, he became a teacher and he was very busy.

MRR: Wait, aren't you also a teacher?
Kind of. I'm not a teacher, I work at an alternative high school and I'm like a teacher's assistant. I run all these after-school programs, like music recording, and a podcast, and all this stuff. I don't have responsibilities of grading papers and things like that, so I don't have work I have to do being outside of work. But anyway, so Jules stepped back, and from there I've been running it and trying to make the transition to vinyl and maybe tapes here and there, which is slow because it's really expensive to get records pressed now.

MRR: Yeah, but that was always the plan, to start with cassettes and move to vinyl?
That was basically the plan, yeah. I mean, we had a couple of initial ideas. We wanted to do 7"s, 7"s are probably my favorite format. But it's so incredibly un-cost-effective to do 7"s at this point, which sucks.

MRR: Why are they your favorite format?
I have a pretty short attention span so I can flip through the real fast, that's the main thing. *[laughter]* But they're sort of my favorite to sit down with a stack of them and flip through them real quick.

MRR: That makes sense. You were talking about how it's not feasible financially.
Yeah. We did the Rob Noyes / Alexander split 7". And we did that as cheaply as we possibly could, but we were pretty much taking a loss on the wholesale of it. And then an LP isn't even that much more expensive at this point. It's just that the pressing plants have geared everything to do LPs, not 7"s.

MRR: Why did you want to start doing cassettes first?
Purely financial decision. I like cassettes, they're cool, but I would much rather always listen to a record than a cassette, so doing the cassettes right off the bat was—I can crank out cassettes real fast with a tape duplicator that does fifteen at a time at high speeds. So I can make cassettes happen really easily, but the hope was that we could bring in some money and do records, but you also make so little money off doing cassettes that it never really worked out that way.

MRR: So then when do you decide, "It's time to do records now"?
I started working pretty quickly on the Reptile Ranch reissue. I kind of figured from the beginning that I wasn't going to make enough money off the cassettes to put out a record, but it could be something to start a label fund, to have some money for the label, and then I could figure out the rest of the money. But the Reptile Ranch thing fell into place easily, and then at that point I just had to figure out the money to do that record. Since then I was able to sort it out to do my LP and the split 7", and there's been a couple of cassettes here and there, but I've just been working on a couple of new records that will come out later this year.

MRR: Is that your focus now, you want to be more focused on records than cassettes?
Yeah, cassettes here and there, but mostly I just want to be doing records. I did a lot of releases really quickly. The label only started in 2016, and there's already almost twenty releases. That was really tiring, so I'd like to do maybe a little bit less releases and have them be sort of a bigger to-do, like doing records and stuff that is a bigger production. I'll still do cassettes, they're easy to do, but I don't want them to be the focus of the label.

MRR: That kind of leads into another question I was wondering about: What *do* you see as a focus of the label? Is there a musical descriptor that connects everything you put out, or how do you decide what belongs on your label?
I kind of wanted to model the label off of Twisted Village, which is a label originally from Connecticut, and then Boston has a record store, and they had done their crew of bands like Crystalized Movements and Vermonster and Major Stars, and all these bands came out on Twisted Village. But then they would branch out sometimes to friends or associates or other folks who seemed connected with the label. So that was sort of the idea because in New Haven right now we have a crew of people who have been making a lot of music, so I wanted that to be the main focus but have the label have the ability to branch out and do other things. If there was a musical focus, I think it has something to do with psychedelic music, I guess. But if I like it, I would put it out, you know?

MRR: Yeah.
I'm still hashing that out. I want to do more reissues and archival releases, but the Reptile Ranch record was a ton of work. It took a year or more of continuous work on that to really put it together. I just haven't jumped back into doing a reissue or archival work because it's such a long process. But I'd like to do more.

MRR: I could tell from the finished product of Reptile Ranch just how much work must have gone into that. It's really beautiful! It's a beautiful reissue.
Oh, thanks.

MRR: How did that come about? In the Reptile Ranch interview in *Maximum Rocknroll*, you really didn't talk about that aspect of things.
Reptile Ranch was a band I was really interested in from the Messthetics compilations, and for a long time I had only heard one or two songs they had on the CDs. And then at some point I delved a little deeper and found the 7"s and stuff. And I didn't really have any intent to do a reissue, but for whatever reason, one day I just Google searched their name to see what would come up, and they actually had a website for their record label that hadn't put anything out since 1980.

MRR: Whoa.
There was, like, flyers and mp3s of unreleased songs, so I just emailed them, and they emailed me the next day and said they would do it. *[laughter]* It was remarkable easy.

MRR: Did they have a whole bunch of stuff that made it easier for you to put it together?
Yeah, they had everything pretty much ready to go. They had the

master tapes of most of it, and there was—there's four unreleased songs on that LP, but they sent me a ton more. Some of the recordings were kind of rough, so we had to sort through them and decide what was usable. In the end, we decided to keep it pretty narrow in terms of the unreleased stuff. Especially since, the 7"s and the comp tracks, it's not like that stuff was that well known to begin with. So it didn't feel like there needed to be a massive outpouring of the unreleased stuff.

MRR: So if that took a year to put together., it must have been pretty early on the history of C/Site that you started working on that.

Yeah, it was really early. It was just an idea. It just fell into place all of a sudden, and then I was doing it, then I had to figure it out. I didn't really intend to get into even doing a record, let alone this reissue, that quickly, but it fell into place so easily that I just kind of ran with it.

MRR: Nice. I'm getting a little ahead of myself. I want to go back to the super early tapes. Did they come out as a batch, or were you doing them one by one?

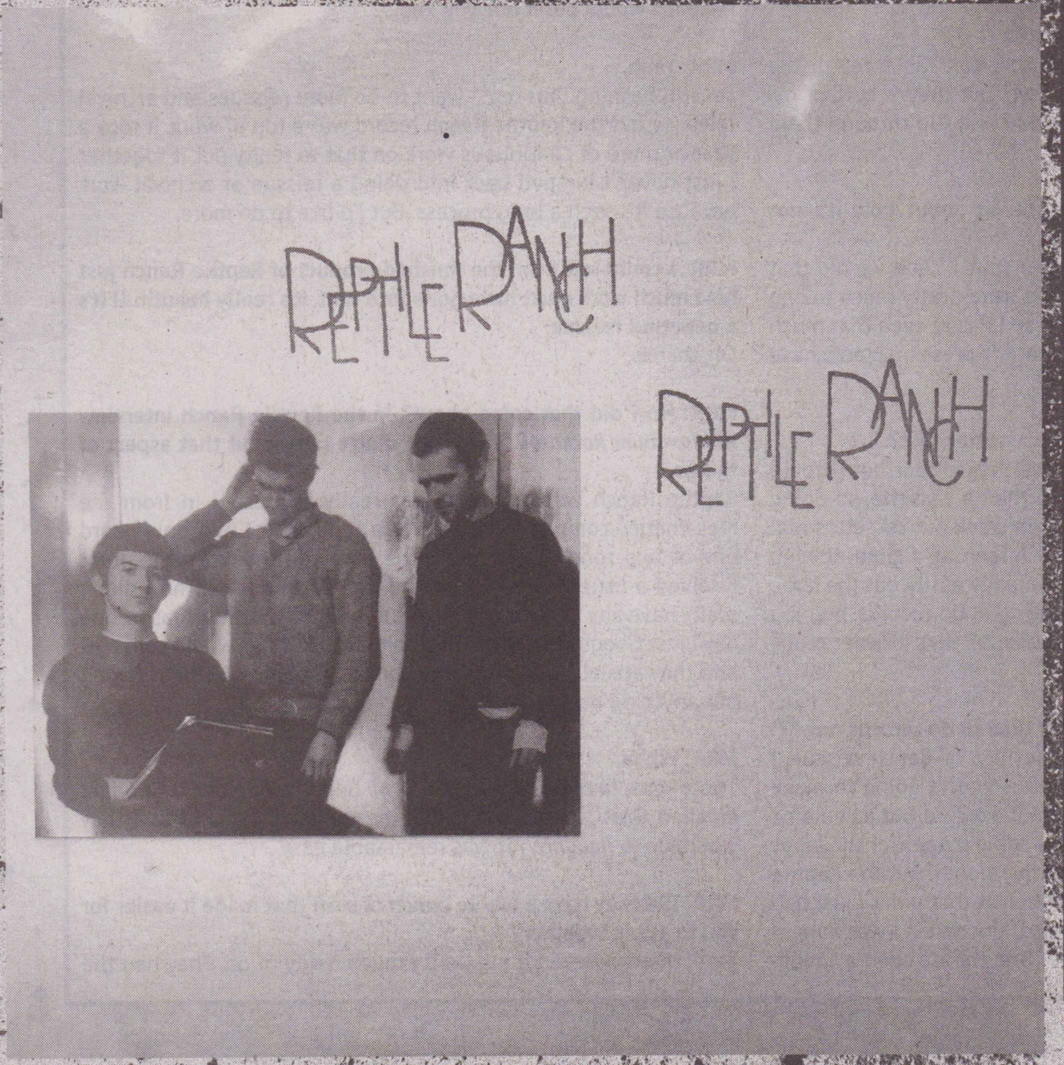
Initially I did them in batches, they came out in threes. The first three were mine,. Oil Wave Surfers, and Medication. Those all came out together. And then there was a second batch: Mountain Movers, Alexander, and xNoBBQX from Australia. Then Headroom and Secret Treaties, those came out together at the same time. And then I think there was another batch of three and another batch—I wasn't putting them out one at a time.

MRR: With that first batch, how did you come to decide on those three releases? Like, one of them is yours; I assume that was an easy choice.

Yeah, that was simple to pick mine because that was just done, and I wanted it to come out, so that was easy.

MRR: Was that your first solo release or had you done stuff for other labels before that?

That was the second solo release. I had self-released before there was a label name. Maybe it's like catalog number CS000, but there was a tape called *Israel* that was self-released, and then Night People from Minneapolis reissued it a little bit after that. The first batch of tapes I did was mine because it was done and I wanted it to come out. And then the Oil Wave Surfers tape was an interesting one. That was going back to when I was in a band called Estrogen Highs and we were on tour and we played in Milwaukee, and we played with this guy Aaron. We were staying up late and hanging out, and he was like, "Oh, I have this recording I made a while ago, you might like it." And he played it for us, and I was really struck by it. I thought it was really great. After that, he sent me the mp3s, and I listened to it for years. I had it on my computer for a really long time. So when I was starting the label, I was just brainstorming things that could come out, and I thought of that. I had to dig around for a while to figure out how to get back in touch with him because it had been five or six years at that point. He thought it was kind of a silly idea, but he was receptive to doing it. *[laughter]* But I think that tape is really good, so I was psyched to put it out. And then the last is the Medication tape, which is a really good old friend of mine. I used to play in the live version of Medication, but the recordings are my friend Mikey. I feel like I'm always trying to pressure him to put out more stuff, so I just got in touch with him to do that.



MRR: The Oil Wave Surfers I was curious about because I remember Aaron being like "This guy wants to put out a tape of stuff that I recorded like ten years ago?"

[laughter] I didn't even realize it was—he told me after the fact. I assumed it was something he had recorded recently when I heard it, and I think I heard in 2010. I assumed it had been recorded close to then, and he told me when we were doing the tape, "Oh yeah, I recorded it in 2005 or something."

MRR: I'm glad you mentioned Estrogen Highs. I'm curious about your transition out of the band and towards this solo project, and I'm wondering if that corresponds at all to the beginning of the label.

In some ways it does. I mean, I played in that band a long time,

writing almost all the music for that band. We made quite a few records and toured quite a bit, and it kind of started to wind down. My friend Mark had left the band and we decided that was going to be it. But I'm always working on recordings and things, and even with Estrogen Highs, there was a good chunk of the material that I've played everything on the version that's on the record. I played all the instruments or did everything for it. And that band started as a solo project also. So basically the band kind of fizzled out, but I'm always working on stuff, so I was like, "what's the next step?" I sort of brainstormed for a while and decided I would just play under my name, I guess. And it coincides with the label in some ways. The solo thing a little bit predates actually starting the label, but the idea was sort of planted when I got going with the solo stuff that I might need to be self-releasing some stuff. And if I'm going to be self-releasing, then maybe actually trying to do a label might be a good idea. I think they are definitely connected: once I was playing strictly solo, it would make sense I would have a vehicle for releasing that.

MRR: You briefly had a label that released an Estrogen Highs record, right?

Yeah, I've toyed with a few labels. I had a label that did years ago that did a couple cassettes and a couple 7"s, and then the second Estrogen Highs LP was a label that never came to fruition, Grammery Records 001. And there was ideas for more records doing that. I was doing that with Kryssi Battalene, who I still collaborate with a lot on different music stuff. I don't know, it just never really came together, so that label had one release.

MRR: I feel like I have to ask this. I feel like with your solo stuff, it almost seems consciously uncategorizable. It's pretty genreless. And I feel like Estrogen Highs, in the beginning, got very quickly put into this "garage category." I'm wondering if you felt stuck when you were performing under that name at all, or if you had any conscious move away from that.

In some ways. That definitely happened to Estrogen Highs, and it was definitely frustrating to me to put out records that I knew were not garage records. Especially the last LP, it was not a garage record, but reviews would come out like "New Haven garage band makes another garage record" basically. It was definitely an annoyance. I think with the solo stuff, just where I'm coming from has shifted over the years. I appreciate you saying that it's genreless. I think there's definitely influence from particular things, I'm definitely influenced by certain music But I want to strive to make music that is sort of hard to categorize because I want to make music that's my music and not anybody else's, which is a hard thing sometimes to achieve. And not something that I sit around trying to think too much about.

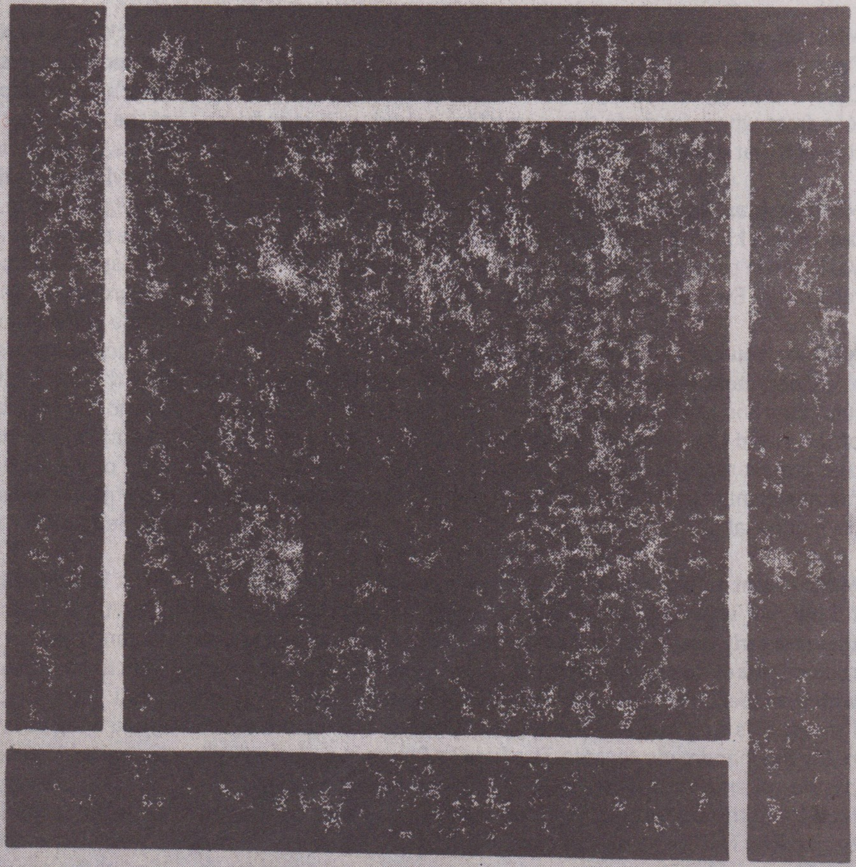
MRR: Right.

Maybe subconsciously I wanted to get away from the labels that were attached to Estrogen Highs. In my mind, Estrogen Highs could be whatever it wanted to be, but it did feel like a lot of times it was pegged as a certain thing and it always was gonna be that thing.to the general public.

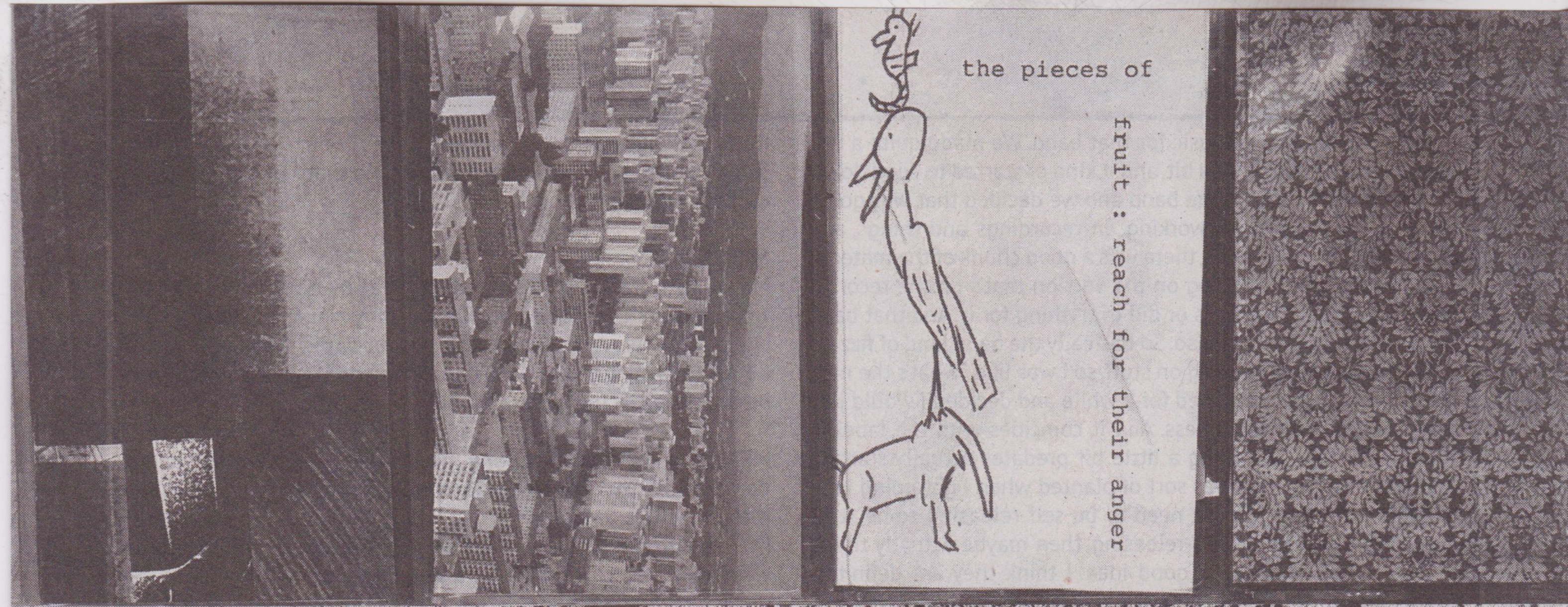
MRR: Now that you're making music under just your own name, do you worry that you as a person will get attached to a label like that as well?

I've never thought about it. I hope not. *[laughter]* I think in some ways there are certain markers that I've seen written about the music I make. There are certain bands that come up, which are definitely influences, they come up for a reason. I understand when people cite the Dead C when reviewing my records. But yeah, I hope it doesn't get pegged. I have a couple of new records coming down the line that are pretty varied so maybe that will help to make that not happen.

MRR: As somebody who is releasing music and who also has a record label, how do you decide what you're going to release on your label, and what you are going to have other people release?



Stefan Christensen's *Shake Off the Village* LP



That's an interesting question. At this point, I don't really want to put out that much of my own stuff on the label. I would really prefer my label to be a vehicle for stuff that I like, especially stuff connected to my immediate good friends in New Haven. My LP, *Shake Off the Village*, I didn't have anybody interested in putting it out, basically. *[laughter]* So, that was more or less the only option, which is interesting since then, after getting a resounding "no" from the folks that I sent it to, now I've actually gotten offers to do records on other people's labels, which is nice. So I'm trying to parcel out stuff that I'm doing solo to other places so that C/Site recordings can be stuff that I like instead. I probably won't hold to that, I'm sure I'll self-release something of mine at some point. But I'd much prefer it to be about music that I like, not my own music.

MRR: So you just pronounced your label like "Site" or "Cite." Sorry I've been saying "Cee Site" the whole time!
Oh, no worries, everybody says "Cee Site." It's actually a running joke from when we made that name that nobody will ever figure that out that it's supposed to be an interchangeable first letter.

MRR: Yeah, as soon as you said it, I was like "Oh, that makes sense," but I guess I hadn't thought of that before!
Yeah, I don't know anybody that I haven't told who says "Site" recordings. Everybody just says "Cee Site."

MRR: Do you identify this label as being punk?
Yeah, definitely. I grew up reading *Maximum Rocknroll* and being into punk and being into hardcore. Punk is most definitely the part of the world that I come from and informs what I do. I recognize that almost nothing that come out on C/Site at this point would fall neatly into the category of punk, but I think that it's a DIY label, it's a punk label.

MRR: I want to ask you about the visual aesthetics of the label. I think that especially the two LPs that you've done have been—there's clearly been a lot of thought that's been put into the visual components of them. Are you trying to have a unified visual aesthetic with the label? Is that something that's important to you?
I mean, it is important to me for records to look nice but I just really like handmade records. The Reptile Ranch is a photograph pasted on and three different rubber stamps, and stamping the labels and the sleeves and everything. And my LP was a paste-on back cover. My friend Kirk did the front cover, and it was a lino cut. Those were not silk screened, it was a way longer process to print those. But, yeah, I want them to look DIY, I want them to look homemade. I went them all to be slightly different, ideally. I don't know if that's something I can maintain always. It's a huge amount of work, but to whatever degree I can, I want the releases to have some sort of aesthetic look to them. The tapes are kind of a different thing. I don't say anything to anyone, if they're giving me artwork for their tape I'm going to release, I'm not going to reject artwork or something like that. I try to match them up in terms of the paper that I use for the printing. And if they can visually match up in some regard, it's cool, but I also don't want to tell people what their releases should look like. As far as the records, I want to have a certain aesthetic, and I think that aesthetic is just some sort of DIY or homemade aesthetic.

MRR: It's interesting that you're talking about the process of making the record covers and the labels and all the stamping and pasting on, it's very complicated and very involved. I also feel like in a lot of the music that you're releasing, there are long and complicated songs, to put it in a very crude way. But at the beginning of the interview, you said that you have a short attention span!
[laughter] I mean, you don't need a long attention span to stamp the same thing over and over again! I'm working on my attention span, I guess. It's taken me a long time. When I was thirteen or fourteen, I heard Minor Threat, and it was the most earth-shattering thing in the world to me. I got the complete discography CD, and from the first track, it's like 49 seconds long, and to me at that time, it was the most utterly perfect—I couldn't believe a song could be so short, and I was so enthralled with it. And I think since then, my attention span has been expanding slowly. But it's taken a while. A lot of the music I'm involved with now is pretty longform, and a lot of jamming and stuff. I don't know how it got to this point, but I ended up here somehow!

MRR: What's coming up for the label?
I don't know what order these things are going to happen in. But the one that's first and foremost in my mind that still has a lot of work to do is a compilation of basically—New Haven is really, really small. It's like 130,000 people, and there's not a very big music scene here. But we have a little crew or collective that consists of six or seven people. There's Mountain Movers, Headroom, my solo stuff, and Alexander, which is my buddy Dave. And so we're gonna put out a compilation of those four bands. It's not supposed to be a New Haven compilation, it's like our crew compilation. So that's kind of the next thing.

MRR: Can I get you to talk about New Haven a little more, since it came up anyway?
Yeah, sure.

MRR: You just said it's not that big of a city. As someone who's never been there, my impression of it is just Yale and pizza. Are you from there, or how did you end up there and getting involved?
I'm from a little bit south of New Haven originally, but I've been in New Haven for quite a long time now. Twelve, thirteen years, something like that. But yeah, Yale and pizza are the things New Haven is known for. And in the state of Connecticut I think New Haven is known for being a dangerous place. So those are the things I associate with New Haven. Yale, pizza, and to people in Connecticut, it's dangerous. But I actually really like New Haven. It's a small and manageable city. I can be in downtown New Haven, which sort of feels like a big city, and I can be in New York City in an hour and a half. But I can also be in the woods in the middle of nowhere in twenty minutes. So it's a nice in-between. And it's relatively cheap, although it's getting more expensive.

I mean, there's not a tremendous amount of musical activity here. It ebbs and flows. It just depends on how much people are willing to put into it at different points in time. There's consistently house shows or live spots. It just depends on who's around and who wants to put the time and energy into making sure those things happen. It really has to be DIY here because everything's utilitarian. Bands don't necessarily think to come here. You gotta sort of reach out to get the to come here.

MRR: That's home to you? Do you see yourself staying there?
Yeah definitely. I like to travel, but New Haven's home base. When I was a kid, my family moved around a decent amount, and I was never happy with where I grew up, so New Haven's definitely home and has been home. My sense of place is in New Haven. I definitely see myself being here but I also—New Haven makes it kind of easy for me to branch out a little bit, and with the job that I work, I get time off and can go travel and go places. I've been a lot of places, but there's nowhere else where I was like "I'll move here."

MRR: And now you're gonna put out a New Haven record.
Yeah, that'll be an LP. I'm hoping it will be out in the fall. And then other stuff on the label. I'm kind of trying to keep it limited right now. I'm working on that band Mountain Movers, it'll be a 12" EP that will be a preview of the new LP they have coming out on Trouble in Mind. Uh, I could talk about Headroom for a second. Because I play in that band, I guess.

MRR: You guess?!
Oh, yeah, I definitely do. *[laughter]* Yeah Headroom, I mentioned Kryssi Battalene before, she plays in Mountain Movers, and Headroom is sort of her project that she directs. It takes on many forms, but we mostly play sort of like a psych rock band with three guitars, bass, and drums, But we also have done it with all kinds of incarnations with two guitars and a synthesizer, or we had an upright bass player play with us before. We kind of free form and can do whatever with it, which is fun. But definitely a psych rock band is not within the parameters of *Maximum Rocknroll. [laughter]*

MRR: I also want to ask, what do you see as the future of the label in a more general sense? More records and fewer tapes?
Yeah, definitely more records. Fewer tapes and more records. Mountain Movers and Headroom are both on Trouble in Mind, so both those bands are going to be giving their LPs to them, first and foremost. So I'd like to be sort of the catcher of the other stuff. Do the EPs and the whatever miscellaneous stuff of the New Haven folks, specifically Headroom, Mountain Movers, myself, and Alexander. I really want to do more archival stuff and reissue stuff. There's a lot of stuff from the '90s that was CD only that I'd love to put out on LP.

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WHIP

Winnipeg kinda sucks. It's really cold, cool bands rarely come through the city, and there's really not that much going on at the best of times. Being what it is, the tight-knit group of folks who come together to book gigs, attend shows, and play in bands has always been that life-affirming force for those of us who choose to stay here. It gives us all something to look forward to. WHIP has been one of the most welcome additions to that community since their insurgence in 2015, serving a refreshing take on early Rough Trade records as played by adult punks who weren't super seasoned musicians, but just wanted to rock. Also, everyone in the band is in love, which I think is basically always the sign of a supergroup. Debuting on Neck Chop Records, their self-titled EP will be sure to make rounds outside of our frigid, prairie hellscape, and everyone should do themselves a favor and pick it up.

Introduction and interview by Laura Rewucki. Photos by Alex Kress and Dwayne Larson.

Nathan: Bass. Heidi: Drums. Steve: Guitar. Ferro: Vocals.

MRR: So WHIP was originally a three piece with Ferro on vocals and bass. What was your skill level when you started the band?

Ferro: Uh, zero?

Steve: Non-existent.

Heidi: Very minor.

MRR: What spurred that decision to start this band with no real experience?

Steve: Ferro and I talked about starting a band for a while, with the idea of playing instruments we didn't know how to play. We approached Heidi to play drums in it. We were listening to a lotsa music made by people who also didn't know how to play their instruments well. Rough Trade bands, like Raincoats and Kleenex and Swell Maps-type bands. Some were better than others, but there wasn't a lot of skill and they still wrote good songs! You can still make decent sounding songs if you're kind of terrible at playing your instruments.

Ferro: I don't think we sound anything like what we tried to start out as. That was, like, an ambition, but it just didn't happen. I wanted to learn to play bass and do vocals, but after a few shows and demo tapes, I wanted to only do vocals...

Heidi: I always wanted to play drums! I had an electric kit, but it's not the same. We learned our instruments together, learning covers at first. When we learned a Wire cover was when I realized that I didn't have to play in really showy way. It made me feel that I didn't have to be crazy good at drumming, you know?

Steve: Basically we're not all a bunch of all-star musicians here. Except for Nathan.

MRR: Does anyone ever tell you when you've messed up a set?

Steve: No, people are too nice to mention that. If something bad happens, we talk about it as a band.

Heidi: When we practice, we're all pretty brutal to each other.

Ferro: Uh yeah, there's a lot of open dialogue here. I mean, we are two couples.

Steve: Yeah, we're like ABBA.

Ferro: Or like the Canadian Fleetwood Mac. The comfort level is pretty high.

MRR: So Nathan□s the newest edition. Nathan, you□re not from here. Why?

Nathan: I was not born here.

MRR: Where are you from?

Nathan: Saskatchewan.

Heidi: You guys have been in bands together before, though...

Nathan: Yeah, Self-Interest from 2009–2012? And Salt Lick from 2012–2014.

Steve: That sounds about right.

Heidi: How were those bands different from this band?

Nathan: It's...different. You're comfortable around certain people. So that's similar. And you get to know how to interact with each other musically, in a certain way. I think that's different because you've become better, Steve—

Steve: Yeah.

Nathan: That's not a veiled insult or anything.

Steve: No, it's true. For both bands I had to learn how to play an instrument, but with this band it's been more of a learning experience together. In Self-Interest, Nathan was the primary songwriter, he'd write songs and we'd learn them. Salt Lick was more collaborative, but WHIP...Nobody ever comes to practice with a song written. It's more fluid with this band together; we just do it and make things up.

Nathan: It's more of an honest collaboration; you're not trying to one-up anybody else—

Ferro: Yeah, you would win.

Nathan: There's no degree of that, everybody's just trying to figure out what works.

Steve: There's no competition, it's just learning and making things work.

Ferro: Back to the question on how this band is different. Obviously, you guys are in a band now with your wife and girlfriend. Does that add any sort of weird element?

Steve: We just get to spend more time together.

Ferro: Oh god.

Steve: Just kidding.

Nathan: I think if anything, there's a bit more honesty just in that, like sometimes you don't want to say something negative to hurt someone's feelings. But I think with us, because we have close relationships...You kind of just say it. It's just understood that there's nothing malicious or anything really negative meant by it.

Steve: We don't have to tiptoe around things. The band is intertwined with our relationships too. You have to treat it like anything else.

Nathan: There's also this degree of when we go to practice, there's "friend time" and "band time." "Band time," the relationships dissolve a bit because you have to be on the same level. But the closeness is established.

Steve: It's the same when we play shows outside of Winnipeg, too. We do fun stuff as well together.

Nathan: We work hard. We play hard.

Ferro: Do you think touring together will be much different? We haven't done this together. I feel like it's going to be like a family road trip. Or is it just better because you don't have to miss anyone at home?

Steve: Yeah, that's a big thing! It'll be fine. I can't see us getting in a huge fight or something. We're not going out somewhere for the purpose to like, touring like it's a job. We just want to have a good time and play where we haven't played before. I just want to play in new places, meet new people, and see other bands play.

Nathan: Plus there'll never be that odd man out moment...If you're just four friends, and there's one person being annoying, you don't say anything out of respect or friendship. But Heidi, if you're being annoying, I'll be like, "Heidi, you're being annoying."

Steve: Anyway...We started this band because not much was happening in Winnipeg and we wanted to have more shows here again. I don't know, nobody in the Winnipeg scene right now is under the age of, like, 26, 27. It's weird for people at our ages to learn new instruments and try and write music, because I think that's something you do when you're, like, 17.

MRR: I feel like there's *less* kids now starting bands, here. I don't even know if there are all-ages shows.

Ferro: Yeah, there are no all-ages shows here. We don't even have an all ages venue!

MRR: There's no children!

Steve: I talked to people in other cities and in the US, and everyone says they don't know anyone that goes to shows under the age of 25 or 26. The youngest people I know are like...25.

Heidi: 25 is the cut off.

Ferro: Is there a secret scene that we're just not aware of? That we're just not invited to because we're too old?

MRR: I feel like that's what happened in Toronto. All those kids basically just started their own scene as teenagers outside of the big-name Toronto hardcore scene.

Ferro: I love it.

Steve: I hope that happens here. I'm going to be 30 soon. That's not a very comforting thought.

MRR: Anyways. You're on Neck Chop Records now, based out of California. How'd that all come together?

Ferro: Yeah, it's cool. Brandon messaged me on Bandcamp and asked if we'd be interested in putting our demos out on a record. I was like, "whoa, I think we can do a bit better than the demos!" So we decided to write a few new songs and record them, and re-record some of our existing songs. We were saving up with our band fund to put out a record ourselves, so when he offered I was like "well, that's a much better idea."

Steve: It was time for us to do a new recording anyway, and it all fell into the right place at the right time.

MRR: So Steve actually does his own distro / label, Electric Heat, right here from home in Winnipeg. Do you feel like any desire to self-release your own records?

Steve: I feel like with Neck Chop, our record is better distributed than if I did it. If I had self-released our album, there's likelihood that people wouldn't take a chance on something from here.

MRR: Unless Jimmy puts it on his YouTube channel.

Ferro: He did not. He did say that we had a good demo...He just chose not to put it up. Oh god, maybe don't include that!

MRR: I'm not trying to beef Jimmy. I'm just saying he tells people what they like and they listen.

Steve: But yeah, with Brandon putting out our record it has better exposure. When Ferro and I were in California, we saw copies of our record in a record store before we even had them.

MRR: So the new record. What was the evolution from the first demo to this record? What were you kind of going for?

Heidi: Oh god. I don't know. We've done some new songs since, and I keep thinking those are on the record, but they're not.

Ferro: Yeah, we put out a tape that we recorded the after record was recorded, but before the record came out.

MRR: The *Cancon Icon* tape?

Ferro: Yeah!

Heidi: But obviously the record is more exciting! We've written new songs since the record came out, so now we have more to record.

Steve: I feel like the way we write out songs and progression between each recording is similar...But it sounds better, obviously, because we play more music together and we're getting better at our instruments. I still think some of the first songs we wrote are good, and we'll keep playing them.

MRR: As you go along, there's probably songs where

you think "now that we wrote new songs we'll never have to play those other ones again!"

Steve: Yeah that's happened a lot of times. But I don't know. You write a song and you think it's fine, but sometimes they're terrible.

MRR: What would you do if someone tried to sound like your band?

Ferro: Um, flattering, but try harder. Shoot higher.

Steve: There are bands that are similar, but they're better than we are.

Ferro: Much better.

MRR: How important is representation for you in this band, being a woman and a woman of color who learned their instruments later in life? Do you feel like that was ever important to you?

Ferro: Yeah, growing up in the hardcore scene, there weren't that many or any visible women in bands here. Going to Sound & Fury in like, 2006 or 2007? I don't remember there being a single woman playing in any of the twenty or so bands that played. I grew up being friends with guys saying shit like "Oh you're not like *other* girls, you're not a coatrack." That kind of attitude, total bullshit. I didn't know any better, it was disgusting. So yeah, representation is important.

Heidi: You were in the scene for a long time, like ten years into it before you started a band.

Ferro: Yeah, I guess.

Heidi: Why did it take so long for you to be in a band??

Ferro: I guess because nobody asked me to be in a band. It didn't occur to me that I could just start one myself. In my head I was like "Oh, that could be fun, but nobody's asked me!" Like one, I didn't know how to play and instrument. Two, I was painfully shy. I guess that's why. I didn't have the confidence in myself at that age!

MRR: Do you feel like growing up in that climate, there's this desire to sort of present in a more stereotypically and overtly feminine or sexual way that helps you reinforce that certain notions are completely antiquated?

Ferro: I guess I dress overtly feminine and sexual. I don't know. Maybe to some people's standards I do? It's what I'm comfortable in. I'm really feeling myself lately, but maybe that makes some people uncomfortable?

MRR: When the band had three members, so that the women outnumbered the men, did you still find that people would gravitate to Steve to ask him questions?

Ferro: I get extremely offended when people talk to Steve about our band instead of me. It's not just he's a man in this band, but he's also my husband and I just don't like that. Sorry.

Heidi: Recently this guy came up to me and Nathan and he actually said "Hey, I really like your band. I like how it's female-infused!" But we're half female and half male members. What does that mean! Infused is just a weird word.

MRR: Yeah, like I usually consider an infusion to be a more minimal hint of something. La Croix water is for sure an infused beverage.

Ferro: Yeah, infused is like a drop of fucking flavour in a giant vat of water. So we're not infused!

MRR: Plus, you two are easily the loudest members of the band. The drums are the backbone of the rhythm and the songs are all about "I'm a woman in this shitty world."

Steve: Yeah, Heidi, you play drums, which is easily one of biggest parts of the whole band?

Heidi: No, I'm just infusing it. It's embarrassing when people freak out because I'm a "lady drummer," I don't even know how to react to that.

MRR: Were you influenced by a lot of female drummers?

Heidi: I think I did the opposite. Like Ferro was saying, I was also the "cool girl," I got that into my head a lot. I thought of myself as "with the guys, I don't *have* friends that are girls." All that toxic shit. I wanted to be the girl that did the "guy stuff." I've grown up and realized how incredibly dumb that was! I mean, I don't know if that's why I play drums *now*.

Ferro: You've moved past that, it's OK!

MRR: Tell me more brutal shit.

Ferro: Remember that one guy that was shocked that Heidi was in our band...He tried to get you to pay for our own show? You were like "Hey, I'm in this band!"

Heidi: I'm pretty sure that was the same night where I said "Oh cool, there's a smoke machine here" out loud and this tech dude says "it's a *fog* machine" and he proceed to pick up all my drum gear and set it up for me.

Ferro: It's also not *real* fog, it's *fake* smoke. It's an indoor vape machine.

Nathan: It's actually a large vape machine.

MRR: Also, *shut up*.

Ferro: Oh my god. Once, we played at this really shitty bar, and after our set this blind guy went up to my friend Sam and asked if the girl singer was hot. He wanted a description of what I looked like.

Steve: To be fair, that show was a very toxic environment, both emotionally and probably physically as well.

Ferro: Environmentally as well.

Steve: Environmentally for sure. I would suggest not going into the King's Hotel.

Ferro: Yeah, reverse shout out to the King's Hotel.

MRR: The Winnipeg scene has reached a pinnacle of female and just non-male involvement recently, which is kind of a nice change of pace.

Ferro: Yeah. It's great, I can't remember there being this many bands with this much diversity in this city in punk...ever? It's great. We're all friends, we all support each other. It's really nice to have that. Shout out to Reality Group, Malingerer, Honey, Human Music.

MRR: You don't want to shout out those Roshi Boys?

Ferro: *Reverse* shout out to the Karoshi Boys. Just kidding. Shout out to Karoshi. But yeah. In general there's a lot more going on in Winnipeg then there has been in recent years. It's been pretty fun. More touring bands should consider making the drive out here. If you're playing Minneapolis, you might as well drive another eight hours and play Winnipeg. And if you're playing Fargo...Like, just drive up here already! Hit us up.

MRR: Well, we should wrap this up. Before we end this, do you want to maybe talk about your lyrics a bit?

Ferro: I guess I talk a lot of shit about stuff that I don't like? It's mostly my perspective on the world, obviously. I can scream in someone's face and nobody is going to get mad at me. Normally when you do that—

MRR: It's generally frowned upon.

Ferro: Yeah. It's frowned upon in our culture. It's nice to write about things that you have passionate feelings about, and maybe other people can relate to what you're saying. I write about hating working because I hate having to work. In this band, we all unfortunately have professional level jobs to some degree, and it sucks.

Heidi: Working full time is hard. It sucks sometimes because I'm sometimes in a bad mood and we don't have a ton of time, we can't practice very late. But it's kind of a good thing.

Steve: We make the most of it?

Heidi: It's good to not have expectations. Sometimes you surprise yourself. The fact that we have such limited time, it means we don't have a lot of time to overthink.

Ferro: I do a lot of overthinking.

Heidi: The rest of us don't, so it just comes out raw.

Steve: Sometimes I feel when I'm most creative with music, I'm nowhere near a guitar. Then when I'm home from work, I'm miserable and frustrated and now this is the *last* thing I want to do in the world. I'd rather watch Seinfeld or something.

Ferro: It's hard. The job I had before my current one was really brutal; I was working more than 40 hours a week. Your mental energy is just drained from being in a stressful environment all week. Having such short periods of time to work on something you actually want to work on, when it's supposed to be a creative outlet for you. But after work, you're so emotionally drained and stressed out, it's hard to focus on something you actually want to focus on because you're stressing about fucking budgets and spreadsheets even though that stuff really don't matter much. It's just really difficult. I'm envious of people that make it work with part time jobs, or bar jobs or whatever. They seem to get more free time to do things that they really want to do, but then when I look back at being younger, working in call centres and restaurants, I was miserable then. Miserable then and I'll be miserable now.

Heidi: Always find a reason to be miserable.

Ferro: I'll always be miserable if I have to work. I don't believe people who say you have to find something you're passionate about and being happy for the rest of your life working. I don't know who you are, but fucking call me and tell me about it because I think it's a myth.

Steve: I feel if I worked part time I'd get distracted all the time and not make the most of it anyways.

Nathan: Realistically, even if we all worked twenty hours a week...It's tough to say we'd ever practice more than twice a week anyways.

Steve: If there's a sense of "you only have this much time," it gives you pressure to do something with that time.

Ferro: Well, nobody fucking cares if we have a new song for a show coming up, literally nobody cares if we put out another tape. But we get stuff done by these imaginary deadlines we give ourselves from this internalized pressure that we put on ourselves.

Steve: I'm a weekend punk.

Ferro: Part time punks...I guess this band and the other bands we're in or have been in are just one of the few creative outlets where we can do and say whatever we want. Writing songs and playing shows is fun. Having to work sucks. Who can't relate to that? We all hate working.

MRR: That's why you're punk.

Ferro: Yeah, but I still have to work.

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MOVIES

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CAROLYN KEDDY

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JUST GO ASK JOHN GACY

If I had the time, I would sit down with every musician I could find and listen to their story. I enjoy the stories. There are usually similarities, but each one has its uniqueness. I like the lesser known, stranger ones. Some are interesting. Some are unbelievable. Some make you want to leave.

Documentaries about punk scenes can be exactly like that. **Oil Capital Underground** has all the elements. It tells the story of the Tulsa, Oklahoma punk scene from the mid-'70s to the mid-'90s. Fortunately, it was a small scene.

An unusual aspect of the Tulsa scene is that was instigated by the Sex Pistols' 1978 Tulsa show. Not many Americans got to see that infamous Sex Pistols tour. Usually US punks say what inspired them to be punks was when they first saw the Ramones and they realized they too could be in a band, so they started one. I would imagine the Tulsa punks might have a bit of a different outlook on punk, especially given the media hype surrounding the Pistols' tour. If they did, they seemed to keep the outrageousness in check (at least until the '90s).

Oil Capital Underground divides itself up into chronological sections. There is the usual ebb and flow: bands form and break up, then new bands form. A new club opens and shuts down, then a new one opens. It happens everywhere, but I still like the details. I would have liked to see Los Reactors or the New Mysterians at the Bleu Grotto. Or one of the shows at 424 where they took over an empty warehouse without informing the landlord and started having shows by stealing electricity from the nearby utility pole. Or to have been yelled at by K at Club Nitro. These are the sorts of stories I like to hear. **Oil Capital Underground** has them all.

The two Tulsa bands I am familiar with, Los Reactors and NOTA, get ample screen time. There is cool footage of the bands performing back then as well as present day interviews with band members. Of course, there are plenty of other bands spanning the decades covered. Each band and venue gets placed in the Tulsa musical historical context. I may now know too much about the Tulsa scene for my own good. **Oil Capital Underground** is very thorough.

I have one request of future punkumenatrians: no more Keith Morris. Morris pops up in everything these days, but he does not have anything worthwhile to contribute. It all sounds like generic statements that could be applied to any city, venue, band, etc. In **Oil Capital Underground** he makes the comment that Tulsa has the most beautiful women. That's cringeworthy enough coming from a sixty-two-year-old man. What is more creepy is that last month I reviewed **The Outhouse The Film 1985-1997**, which also has an interview with Morris in which he comments on how beautiful the Lawrence, Kansas women are. In that one he also manages to slam the Circle Jerks' usual female fans as being ugly beasts. Enough already.

Oil Capital Underground ends with the singer of the Kids Who Never Learned How To Colour Inside Of The Lines exclaiming "to any young punk rock kids watching right now, you're fucking welcome." I just rolled my eyes. This comment comes after the oldsters spend a few minutes lamenting the death of the scene, how there is nowhere to play anymore, people don't come to shows, how things will never be the same, etc. Didn't these people listen to themselves at the beginning of the film discussing how there was nowhere to play so they went out and found places to play? You've got to do it yourself. Hopefully, those unappreciative kids watching this will. I'll look forward to their punkumentary as well.

Everyone in the Tulsa area and those looking for a summer road trip: **Oil Capital Underground** will be having its theatrical premiere at the Circle Cinema in Tulsa, OK on Friday, August 3rd at 7:30pm. Be there! (facebook.com/groups/oilcapitalunderground)

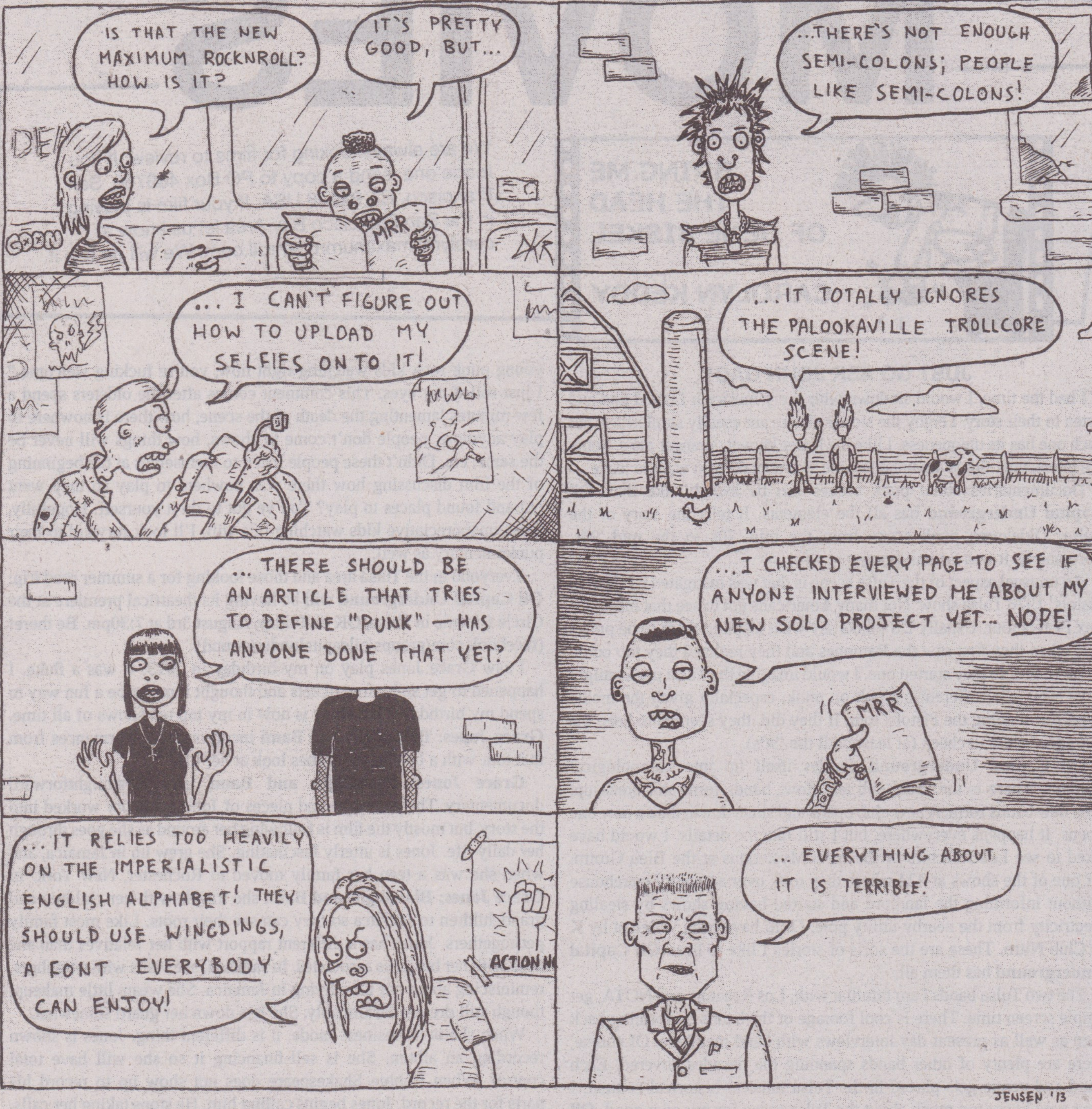
I saw Grace Jones play on my birthday in 2015. It was a fluke. I happened to get some free tickets and thought it might be a fun way to spend my birthday. That show is now in my top ten shows of all time. **Grace Jones: Bloodlight and Bami** incorporates performances from that tour with a behind the scenes look at her life.

Grace Jones: Bloodlight and Bami isn't a straightforward documentary. There are bits and pieces of Jones's history worked into the story, but mostly the film is following her around as she goes through her daily life. Jones is utterly fascinating. She grew up in Jamaica, and when she was a teen her family moved to Rochester, New York. In **Grace Jones: Bloodlight and Bami** she travels with her children and grandchildren to Jamaica so they can see their roots. Like most family get-togethers, Jones has a different rapport with her relatives than she does with her business associates. In Jamaica, she visits with neighbors, reminiscing about her time living in Jamaica. She wears little makeup, though still dresses fashionably. She lets down her guard somewhat.

When she is in business mode, it is different thing. Jones is shown recording an album. She is self-financing it so she will have total control. When Robbie Shakespeare does not show up to record his parts for the record, Jones begins calling him. He stops taking her calls. She gets more annoyed leaving him messages, pronouncing his name "Rawbeee." I began to want her to just find a new bass player, which would be easy to do. When he does eventually show up, he is shown sitting on the sofa and nonchalantly plays an impeccable bass line. Obviously she knew what she was doing.

In a similar situation, Jones is in Paris for a television appearance. When she shows up, the director has her performing with a group of young female dancers in negligees. She comments that she feels like the madam at a brothel. He also wants her to remove the ornate mask she is wearing so people can see her face. She refuses both. Although she feels really bad that the dancers will lose the work.

Today I heard Jones' "Pull Up To The Bumper" in three different locations: at work, in the grocery store, and at the gym. It sounded great in each locale. Grace Jones is one of a kind. (gracejonesmovie.com)



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The Future Generation:
The Zine Book for Subculture Parents, Kids, Friends & Others
By China Martens
PM Press, 2017
237 pgs | $22.00

China Martens, pioneer of the mama-zine genre, presents a tenth-anniversary edition of her classic zine-book, which includes a new afterword by her now adult daughter, Clover. Printed in 2007, it collects "the best" of her zine, *The Future Generation*, from its first issue in April 1990 (when her daughter had just turned two years old) to Issue 14 in March 2005. The chosen selections focus on China's personal writings, not the contributions. The writings do an exemplary job of capturing not only China's changing interests over the years, but also her journey as a woman, mother, writer and activist.

Becoming a mother just shy of her 22nd birthday in 1988 when "most punks weren't parents and most parents weren't punks," China started *The Future Generation* during a time before the internet as a way to find and connect with other subcultural parents. In the subculture where she'd lived actively for years, China felt disconnected and easily recognized a void in her peers' consciousness in terms of child-related issues. She didn't know then that her cutting edge drive to put those new mama feelings and observations into zine form would years later inspire an entire new generation of subcultural parents and mama zinesters, even if her "squat daycare revolution" wasn't ever realized.

I first discovered *The Future Generation* a full decade after China published the first issue when reading her regular column by the same name in *Slug & Lettuce*. I was a new mama in 2000, and because her writing was warm, accessible, and the kind of raw that's full of emotion and honesty, I felt an immediate need to get in touch with her to thank her for helping me feel less alone in my new mama life.

When the next issue of *The Future Generation* zine came out in May 2002 (issue #11), I ordered one right away. When it came in the mail, I knew I was going to love it from the cover alone. No Baby Gap modeling here, the toddler on the cover looked real—adorably tousled from outdoor fun. In the background, the parents hanging out at an outdoor punk show racked up immediate points too. The same kind of real-life, rough around the edges parent and kid imagery is captured again here in the zine-book: pregnant synchronized swimmers in bikinis, naked baby buns running down an empty road, mama bands, mom and daughter photo booth strips, tattooed parents, demonstrations, collages, and breastfeeding babies.

When I started reading that issue #11, I loved it even more. From the introduction, where I felt like my new mama life had been captured (I read I wasn't the only mama who had trouble getting out of the house and managing baby fussiness in public) to the excellent first-hand experience-based advice I'd need years down the road in "The Angst of Being The Parent of a Young Teen," I became a loyal fan. No mainstream parenting magazine tripe here! Nothing insinuating how inadequate a mama I'd be for not doing things the status quo way and no generic checklists for juggling baby and housework. I never missed an issue after that.

This book is a timeless resource for parents, caregivers, and any who are involved in their lives. There are numerous pieces on the desire to network with other anarchist / punk / subcultural parents as well as essays on being on welfare: tuning into children's physical and emotional needs, fostering freedom and responsibility in children, going after hopes and dreams, nurturing children with respect, anarchist child raising, struggling, when motherhood sucks, single dads, violence, sexuality, schooling, non-punitive discipline, class-conscious children's liberation, breastfeeding, politics, resistance, and family history—all of it written through China's single mama lens while she focuses on raising her daughter, the both of them surviving, living, and growing together and in their communities.

Hearing Clover's adult voice in the Afterword of this tenth-anniversary edition, "…the prodigy daughter born from the cracks in the cement that my mother cracked with her sledgehammer," solidifies *The Future Generation* as a parenting classic for actual future generations when she concludes, "It is a safe place for the voices of the radical subculture that at the end of the day have one message: you are not alone."

—Jessica Mills

Black Box: A Record of the Catastrophe.
Volume One.
edited by The Black Box Collective
PM Press, 2016
256 pages | $19.95

Capitalism is a catastrophe we all suffer through. Not all to the same extent, of course. However, we often ignore the responsibility of capitalist relations in our suffering. The task that the Black Box Collective has taken is to collect the evidence of this disaster and to preserve it, put it in our faces, and force us to think about it. In short, to generate revolutionary consciousness. "Awakening [the world] out of its dream about itself, in explaining to it the meaning of its own actions." (Karl Marx, as quoted on the back cover.)

Black Box was born after years of meetings, readings and debates between activists, journalists, poets, scholars, philosophers, and artists at an old farm north of Seattle. Finding the opportunity to analyze the times we live in seems like a luxury now, but it's indeed a necessity if we really want to transform our world. The collective offers us its contributions together with other relevant names of the international critical thinking in a series of essays, reports, and poetry with a special focus on class struggle. It's a collection of diverse articles with a common revolutionary will and a constant critique on capitalism.

From the start, it's exciting reading: the story on the working conditions at the shipping graveyards in India, life in the Angola prison in Louisiana, a speech by Silvia Federici about precarious labour and reproductive work, a denunciation of the American military by Caconrad, who is an outspoken queer poet, and the poems of an undocumented dishwasher.

In addition to the aforementioned topics, there is space for cultural criticism ("In Defense of Disco"), gentrification ("Unknown Race Male"), the stirring fiction of Ursula K. Le Guin, a precious letter from a prisoner ("The Pigeon and Me"), an interview of a Trotskyite who is a sitting councilmember for a major American city, media representation of women ("Exiting the One-Dimensional") and much more. The review also has a pretty nice and clean layout, with just a few pictures and some naïve and disturbing illustrations by Peter Wieben.

It is with the philosophical dissertations on the work of Adorno, Benjamin or Badiou that *Black Box* loses strength and effectiveness to me. Sorry, I'm not so well educated. Don't get me wrong, I am sure that behind their thoughts there is an interesting contribution, but if it is to serve to the class struggle, you'd better bring some light to it. Stuart Smithers does it in his article "The Logic of the Martyr," but others (not many, luckily) fall into a dark and intricate academicism. However, *Black Box* succeeds in introducing radical criticism that pushes us into conscious action. It would be great if the writings by this collective inspired more people around the globe to begin projects like this on their own.

—Hèctor

Four Strings, Phony Proof, and 300 45s:
Adventures from Roxy Music, Sparks, & Milk 'N Cookies
by Sal Maida
HoZac Books, 2017
178 pages | $19.99

Sal Maida has led a fascinating rock'n'roll life: though his name is probably most commonly associated with Milk 'N Cookies, the fantastic mid-'70s wimpy glam rock band from Long Island, he also, as his memoir's subtitle notes, did stints on bass with both Roxy Music and Sparks, along with a slew of lesser-known bands. Maida's proximity to rock superstardom, without ever entering that stratosphere himself, gives him an interesting perspective. It's a familiar scenario to fans of rock memoirs: authors typically carry a tinge of bitterness throughout the proceedings, a sense of anger that they never ascended to the rock stardom they envisioned as their destiny. Maida, however, holds no such bitterness. He is first and foremost a music fan, and he seems completely in awe that he's had the good fortune to play with so many musicians he looked up to. It's a refreshing attitude that buoys the book's best moments, and it's tied only to Maida's love of rock'n'roll, not some outside perception of fame levels; whether he's describing meeting the Beatles or the Blossom Toes, his excitement is palpable and infectious.

The second half of the book zeroes in even more on Maida's music fandom. Here, as the title suggests, Maida lists 300 of his favorite 45s that were released between the early '50s and 1978, the years covered in book's first half. It's an eclectic mix of records, hopping genres from rock and pop to soul and doo-wop, with a little punk thrown in for good measure. In this portion of the book, again, Maida's enthusiasm as a pure *fan* of the music is the writing's greatest strength, whether he's detailing the history of the recording or his own relationship to it. Flipping the book to any page in this section results in reading about at least one record you've almost certainly never heard of, and the impassioned way that Maida writes about it will surely convince any open-minded reader to check it out.

Maida's clearly such a font of rock wisdom and passion that talking to him about music seems like it would be incredibly illuminating. That's the problem with the book, though. It's not a conversation, and it's not a blog post. It's a 178-page piece of writing. And there's nothing here to hold it all together: The first half of the book reads not as a life story but as a string of anecdotes with no connecting thread, and certainly no chronological consistency. Characters pop up for a page, never to be seen again—which wouldn't be quite so frustrating if we clearly understood who they were or why they mattered in the first place. No single event holds any weight because there is no central message or theme to the book other than "here's a bunch of cool shit that happened to Sal Maida at some point." Bryan Ferry pops up as Maida's "old boss" twenty pages before the author *ever mentions that he had been in Roxy Music!* The book begins in 1978, then Chapter 2 abruptly begins "In the summer of 1969, I finally made my first trip to England." I mean, it's not until page 95 that the author decides to detail his birth! How can one be expected to follow the chronology of this book, let alone form any sort of cohesive takeaway?

Fans of Roxy Music, Sparks, or even Milk 'N Cookies hoping to get an inside scoop on those bands will walk away disappointed. Maida is clearly far more interested in detailing incidents like the time he *almost* partied with the Rolling Stones than he is in chronicling his own musical career. That's not a bad thing, necessarily; in fact, his lack of pretension can be quite charming. But if the book isn't about Maida's musical career, then it needs to be about *something*. And nothing here quite manages to fill that void.

While I commend the DIY publishing of this book, it's simply undeniable that significantly more editing was required here. Typos can be overlooked, even ones as egregious as shifting out of italics midway through a word. But the collection of scattershot anecdotes here, the lack of any larger narrative, makes it nearly impossible for any reader to follow. Sal Maida seems like he must be a truly fascinating person to converse with. I just wish that would have translated better into a book.

—Miranda Fisher

Stranded in the Jungle:
Jerry Nolan's Wild Ride—A Tale of Drugs, Fashion, the New York Dolls, and Punk Rock
by Curt Weiss
Backbeat Books, 2017
280 pgs. | $24.99

LONDON, 1978:

It's quite a picture: Jerry Nolan, in his late twenties, broke and lonely, trying to fit in with kids only a few years younger who treat him like an elder statesman. He's searching for junk and a band. He wears a bleached haircut, cut like Keith Richards's but sleeker. His pants are pink and baggy, as is his white shirt. He looks the part but he still feels out of place.

This book in many ways is a series of anecdotes, which, while entertaining, causes the book to lack any real depth. The book plays as an "and then there was the time..." narrative. Then there was the time Jerry Nolan dated Bette Midler. Then there was the time Arthur Kane couldn't perform because he was drunk, or fell over his platform boots, or he broke his hand because he was drunk and fell over his platform boots. Then there was the time Chris Stein and Debbie Harry played a one-off show at CBGB's with Robert Fripp. Then there was the time Johnny Thunders didn't show up for the gig.

Being born at the right age to discover pre-war Elvis but too old for the Beatles on Ed Sullivan, Nolan was the quintessential devotee to rock'n'roll. He built a vision of himself, an evolving suit that he stepped into. He called it *profiling,* and for him it was an integral part of being in a band. The aesthetic mattered at least as much as the music. He cut his own hair and that of many of his friends. He was the resident clothing designer for the majority of the bands he was in. When the New York Dolls first got signed, he special ordered two giant pink drum sets. The two kits were hocked, stolen, sold, and lost piece by piece over the next twenty years, but when he passed away in 1992, he still had one of the kick drums. Late in the book, he is shown in dire

straits, his shoes are old, the leather scuffed, but he still carries the air of himself, or the one he invented in his clothing.

In the late '80s, the Village Voice published series of interviews that covered the life and career of Jerry Nolan. These interviews are used for the majority of Nolan's quotations in the book. The interviews themselves are a key part of the text near the end of the book, but at some point I wished I was just reading those interviews because Jerry Nolan, while a teller of tales, seems more capable of painting the picture of his life than anyone else would be.

In the end, anyone who isn't a super Dolls fan, proto-punk or '77 completist need not apply. The book is episodic and at least half, if not two-thirds of the book is an repetitive run of getting clean, finding junk, losing money and rock'n'roll shit, which gets redundant very fast. Perhaps the drug stuff is written in a way to show drugs less moralistically, but I ended up wondering if I had put my book mark in the wrong spot and was reading the same information over and over again. However, Jerry Nolan is an interesting and complex figure, as is Johnny Thunders, who plays a supporting role as sometimes bandmate / surrogate son / worst enemy.

The author, Curt Weiss, is a native of New York and a life-long fan of Nolan's. A drummer, he took the drum throne in the Rockats after Jerry Nolan left. Because of Weiss's knowledge, the book breaks down Jerry Nolan's drumming in a way I cannot fully understand, but to a drummer or musician with more knowledge of music theory it may be a strong point.

If nothing else, this book led me to revisiting *L.A.M.F.*, a record I never liked much. I can only attribute that distaste to the fact that I loved the first Dolls record so much and found it lacking in comparison. On this recent listen, though, I found it electrifying.

—Steve McMillan

In the Eighties:
Portraits from Another Time
by Derek Ridgers
Carpet Bombing Culture, 2017
160 pgs | $30.13

Derek Ridgers is primarily an English fashion photographer and the the focus of this particular body of work explores multiple groups of youth in the eighties. The photographer jumps in various worlds snapping shots of show-goers, club regulars, punks, skins and some kids who hang out. I lived my teen years in the eighties I search through photos such as these, and look for clues that tell me a bit more about the subjects and the scenes they ran in. There is more than a look going on in these pictures, especially with the photos of skins. I look attentively to see what pins they are wearing or who is rocking fascist symbols on their sweater, who is not? This is where I get trapped, what bands does that punk have scrawled on their jacket? The overall feel of the book is one of voyeur into multiple scenes and worlds, which makes me question why the photographer did not follow the subject a bit more? Ridgers had released other publications such as *Skinheads*, which I found to be successful in telling more about a specific group or scene of people. This is a sampling of loads of scenes and it is apparent that dress, hair, and makeup are key here but not sure if much more is being communicated through this selection of images.

Most photos are mid-to-close range, well-executed technically and we get to see the details of the labor and skill involved in goth and punk girl makeup and hairstyles. Skinheads pose and display for the photographer showing off their facial tats and pins. Rockers and metalheads lay on blankets at an outdoor festival. There are numerous photos of couples making out in some dark corner or under a table in a club. The more interesting shots are the few that are of the same person over a period of time. It is interesting to see how that person's look shifted over the years from mohawk, leather jacket and face tats to street crustie, dreads, more face tats, and a dog in hand. What captured my attention about this particular pairing is how time is telling a bit more about the individual and moves away from the fashion being the focus. Overall, this book is fine if you are into glossing over "The Look" of eighties sub-cultures but this body of work could have been so much more interesting if the photographer had pursued their subjects and dove deeper into their lives.

The forward begins to describe how no generation, post eighties, could culturally and stylistically produce looks in the same way, which I disagree with. Furthermore, the writer goes on to describe eighties fashion as a response to political movements as well as society's blandness but I found that the actual photographs lack depth and dwell only on the surface of the subject. It seems that the photographer could have invested more time with the individuals and perhaps a much deeper story could have been shown, one that is more telling of an era, place and time.

—Martin Sorrondeguy

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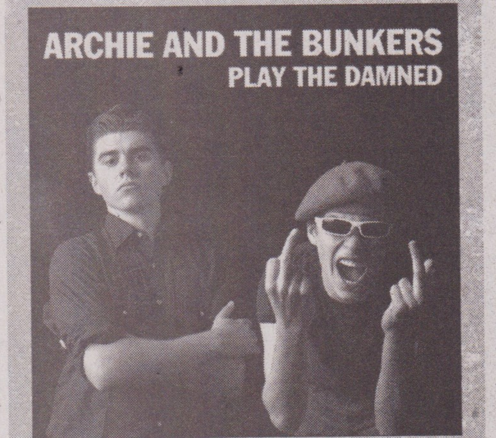

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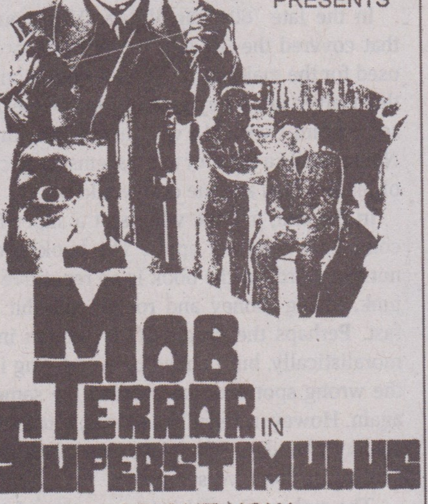

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ABSURDO – "Democràcia Assassina" EP

The first new release from Barcelona's ABSURDO in almost five years does not disappoint. Over the course of five of the six tracks here (one of which is a dirgey instrumental), ABSURDO thoroughly display their mastery of the hardcore genre. The songs mostly follow a similar format, but it's a tried but true formula that works: fast (but not fastcore), clean playing, replete with brief guitar solos that help carry the wild energy of each of the songs. Each cut feels strongly inspired by the energy of many of the early '80s hardcore bands, back before too much of a DISCHARGE influence crept into the scene, and way before anyone ever heard of crossover. Hell, if this were released in '81, people would be buying bootleg ABSURDO shirts all across the world. Highest possible recommendation for hardcore fans. (JD)
(Discos Absurds)

ADACTA – "Zlo" LP

This album starts off with epic war-torn battle metal precision. Neo-crust riffs ensnare the earholes over galloping D-beat and tintinnabulating blastbeats. Vocals sizzle, reminding me of metalpunks MÖRKHIMMEL, CENTINEX, and BOLT THROWER, but also, by the middle mark, I'm reminded of some non-inspired crust recordings such as HIBERNATION. Overall it sounds great, but I feel like it's just going through the formulaic motions. I'm missing the actual anguish and heartbeat on *Zlo* (*Evil*), though it is all performed with wicked instrumental proficiency. There are mine cart chases, there are roller coasters, and there are those music rides that just roll up and down in a circle playing the hits... (JR)
(PHR)

ALAMBRES – "Alambres" EP

Weird that this came out a couple of years ago and we're only reviewing it now, I hope it's still relatively easy to find. ALAMBRES are a two-man band featuring the immortal Martin Sorrondeguy on vocals and Mike Amezcua (of ESPERANZA and TRAGATELO, among others) on everything else. As befitting a studio project, the recording has a nice, rough, lo-fi feel that complements the energy of the music contained herein. Martin's voice, as always, has tremendous power, but it's harnessed here to music that's a bit different than what you'd usually expect from one of his many bands. Indeed, the whole thing has a really interesting DC in the '80s vibe. The A-side is stripped-down, slightly melodic hardcore *à la* the FAITH, while the B-side slows down and shows a bit of proto-emo influence ala EMBRACE or MARGINAL MAN, though it ends with the raging "I Want Out" (the VOID nod out of the tracks perhaps?). This is a cool record. I hope it wasn't a one-and-done project because I'd love to hear more! (AU)
(Huayno Amargo / Odio Los Discos / Sin Temores)

ANOTHER ONE / THE DISTRACTIONS – split EP

ANOTHER ONE is a Midwest (Michigan) pop punk trio with RISE AGAINST tendencies. The DISTRACTIONS is a Midwest (Indiana) pop punk quartet with FACE TO FACE tendencies. Together, they made a pretty copacetic split EP, with each side complementing the other. They both seem to play fairly frequently in their respective cities of South Bend and Grand Rapids, so this split is a good primer if you want to split the difference and wait until they both play together in Kalamazoo. It has to happen eventually, right? They're both some good things coming out of those areas, and it's nice to have good things. (RH)
(Smoking Cat)

ANTI-DOGMATIKSS – "Nooooo (Sessio Completa)" LP

Originally released as a seven-track cassette, here's the whole 1988 session in its unbridled, chaotic glory. Classic Barcelona hardcore thrashers at the height of their power. No breaks, relentless delivery, with a truly blown out "piss off your neighbors" sound. This is a no-brainer for fans of classic Iberian hardcore, and if something between JERRY'S KIDS, HHH, and ILEGAL sounds great to you, this shit definitely deserves a crank. (MA)
(Black Sheep / El Forat / No Thanks!)

ARCANE – "Whispers" LP

Drawing from both peace-punk and darkwave influences, Seattle's ARCANE bestows upon us a set of seven theatrical, earnest tracks. Expectably more polished than the band's 2015 demo, and with an slightly angrier, more dynamic sound. Thoughtful vocal harmonies in the beginning of "Deathless Momento" are backed only by a distorted and chorus-laden guitar—a move we might expect from classic peace-punks like ZOUNDS, but still not often heard outside a folky context—before breaking out into a driving darkwave dance beat. In "Ashes," the repeating vocal interlude is accompanied by a tambourine, creating a

very accessible and almost even catchy hook. Definitely something to check out for darkwave fans in search of something down-tempo for the more solemn, reflective moments in life. (HB)
(Last Hour)

ARCHIE AND THE BUNKERS – "Play The Damned" EP
ARCHIE AND THE BUNKERS are a two-piece garage band consisting of brothers from Cleveland, OH. There are no guitars involved, which gives an interesting twist to some classic DAMNED songs. At first listen these covers sound very much like the originals. The singer does a great Dave Vanian impression, but that's a keyboard playing those leads. The songs are rockin' and as irreverent as they should be when you're covering the DAMNED. Good song choice, too. Not all from *Damned Damned Damned,* and not obvious ones either. This is a fun record. (CK)
(In The Red)

ARMADA – "Bandeira Negra" LP
These Brazilian street punk veterans mug pretty tough from the insert, I wouldn't mess with them...But drop the needle on the record and it's some of the softest pop-street-punk since COCK SPARRER's "Tough Guys." Riffs and vocal harmonies that wouldn't be out of place on the '90s output of NOFX, BAD RELIGION, GREEN DAY, or BLINK-182, albeit with a slightly more rough-hewn vocal drawl. They certainly know their way around a melody: this album's packed with catchy tunes. There's even a couple of ballads, and a banjo on one track. I'm betting that when these guys play they get a rousing singalong going. (AM)
(Hears Bleed Blue / Pirates Press)

ARNDALES – "Shops" LP
In their newest effort, these seasoned musicians from England give us an LP loosely themed around the bizarre world of modern retail. Certainly a critique of consumerism, but it's not without eliciting a modest amount of anxiety for anyone who has had to live this reality day in and day out. The angular, staccato songwriting can certainly put you on edge at times. But most often they blend '90s sounding grunge rock (not too different than QUEENS OF THE STONE AGE) with the pop sensibilities of FRANZ FERDINAND. And in a bizarre twist, a NEGATIVLAND cover finishes off the record. The song doesn't fit the record, but it concludes the conceptual theme perfectly. Rock and roll forever! (FS)
(In the Red)

ASEDIO – LP
Lurching infectious Spanish language street punk anthems. These songs just ooze sweat and crowded off-time sing-alongs in rooms filled with punks on a temporary escape from the world, seeking strength to re-enter that world refueled and empowered. Maybe I'm digging too deep here, but every song feels important and powerful, even in the context of amateurish three chord punk. (WN)
(Mendeku Diskak)

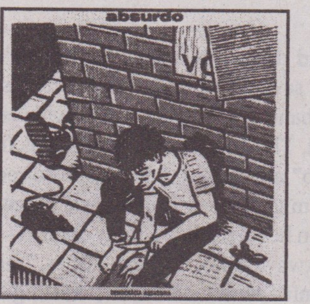
BAD IDEA – CD
Real basic dude bar punk'n'roll from Minneapolis with standard bargain basement riffs purchased on clearance. Sounds like hanging out with some bros, getting drunk and talking shit about women. Next. (GH)
(self-released)

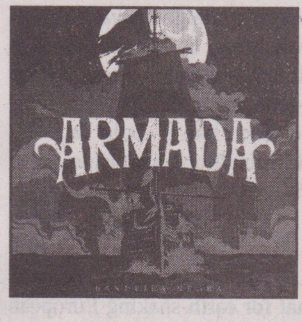
BAD TIMES – LP
Surely you know about BAD TIMES...the one-off assault originally released in 2001, brought about by KING LOUIE, ERIC OBLIVIAN, and JAY REATARD, assembled in haste, recorded under duress and mercy-murdered immediately after the dust settled. A blueprint for success: urgent "shooting from the hip" punk, as they tell it, immeasurably vicious, threatening and life-ruining. Truth be told, I've obsessed over every second of this record since its initial release, never wavering in my devotion. Hearing this tarted-up version—resequenced, remastered, relapsed—proves that these songs can still fuckin' smack me silly! The blood-dripping punk of "Trapped In The City," "Streets Of Iron," and "Sometimes She Wants It" is simply too fucked, too classic, too goddamn great to ignore! How something so ridiculously vile can prove to be so life-affirming is a mystery, but that's why we're here (still!), after all. BAD TIMES caught lighting in a bottle and then smashed it to fuckin' bits. Bless 'em forever and fuck everyone else. A-Fuckin'-Plus. (MC)
(Goner / Nuthin)

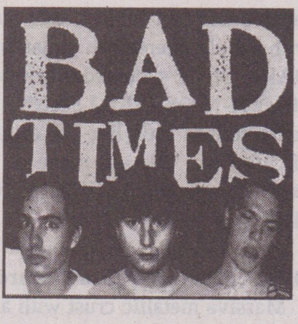
BEEF BOYS – "Melted Like A Witch" LP
I was hoping BEEF BOYS would be an all-female band. They're not, but I like them anyway. Thrashy and noisy thudding rock'n'roll. The singer's vocal inflections remind me of Ian MacKaye. The music seems somewhat intense in a way that may not be too serious. There's a whooshing guitar effect that pops up every now and then that gives the sound a bit of goofiness. (CK)
(Dental)

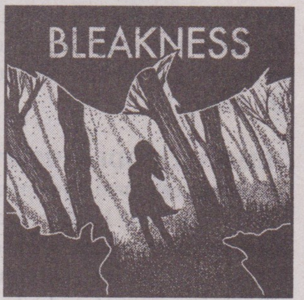
BLEAKNESS – "Frozen Refuge" 12"
Dark and moody hardcore punk from France with tones of modern day post-punk and a vocalist that viciously screams at the ills of power structures in society! In the tradition of recent French bands that have been releasing shit, this is awesome. This EP is full of dystopian themes and resentment. This record is not gonna make you feel better, but it might make you wanna burn a bank. This EP is pressed on a 12" but only has four songs on one side and sick artwork on the other side. (DB)
(Destructure / Kink / La Agonia De Vivir / Sabotage)

THE BRISTLES / RÖVSVETT – split EP
I have no doubt that if you were to somehow take a time machine back to mid-'80s Sweden to tell the members of these bands that they'd be sharing an EP in goddamn 2018 they'd have laughed right in your face. Time has a funny way of slipping away, and somehow here we are checking out the wares of two 30+ year-old-bands. The BRISTLES are unquestionably the success story of the record. They've always been a bit underrated; were they not contemporaries with some of the









best fucking hardcore bands of all time, I have no doubt their brand of UK82-touched hardcore punk would be better remembered than it is. Wonderfully, improbably, they sound pretty much the same here as they did back then. Nothing fancy, but the riffs are solid, the vocal trade-offs are energetic, the string-bending leads wail like fuck and the lyrics are political and pissed. The material leans a bit more in the DISCHARGE direction than I remember the earlier stuff doing, but that may just be my admittedly booze-addled brain fucking up. RÖVSVETT suffer by comparison, offering up two tracks of more technically sound but much less passionate hardcore. The first track is okay, brought down a bit by some unnecessary metallic guitar bits, but the second falls apart completely into some kind of alt-rock trip that does nothing for me at all. Pick this up for the killer BRISTLES material and keep it around for the awesome drunk punx cover art and laughably terrible back cover layout. (AU)
(Civilisation / Heptown / Just 4 Fun / Pike)

BRUTAL BIRTHDAY / TROPICAL TRASH – split EP
BB and TT, OK? First split that's piqued my interest in ages, kudos to Maple Death for takin' the plunge. BRUTAL BIRTHDAY's "Facts" sounds fucked and modern, akin to UROCHROMES and maybe even TERROR VISIONS, real shit-stirring bleep / blop. TROPICAL TRASH's "Last Night Straight" is a lil more dynamic, smartly arranged yet lacking the wallop I crave. Definitely the sorta disc that folks into ball torture would be on board with. More of a warning than an endorsement. (MC)
(Maple Death)

THE BURNING PEPPERMINTS – "Glitter Vomit" LP
Straight up '60s garage psych, Southern BURNING PEPPERMINTS have a West Coast feel with plenty of swagger and sass. Vocals are a noisy and idiosyncratic and well suited for their outré psych racket. (CR)
(High Dive)

CASUAL HEX – "The Zig Zag Lady Illusion" LP
New new music from Seattle, if anything propelling the gospel of the new No Wave according to A FRAMES or MANSION. Some of the probingly atonal guitar lines and sudden haltingly clangy guitar patterns of the late GLENN BRANCA without the louder-than-everything else approach of that or BAND OF SUSANS or LIVE SKULL. It's loud, to be sure, but also focused on a mission of disorientation rather than overwhelming noise. Rhythmically shifty but not funky: mostly the wrong tempo to dance to until the last track, "The Disruption," breaks things down with a DANGEROUS CREW-grade dirty drum machine beat laying the foundation for pitch-shifted vocals and some shifting synth pads, a future hit for EBM night at your local Batcave chapter. Overall, an attempt to capture the experience of slowly being separated from your body through music, an important theme in 2018. (EW)
(Water Wing)

CAVE CURSE – "Future Dust" LP
A little bit of glam rock'n'roll goes a long way amidst fantastical, shimmery synth tones, aggressively major chord progressions, feedback, noise, and mild levels of chaos. It sounds like CAVE CURSE took a QUEEN album, sent it to the year 2050 and back, and then forgot it was in their backpack all night at a real intense rave with lots of flashing lights and hugging and good vibes. Pretty psychedelic, but not without plenty of grit and structure. The cover art makes perfect sense for the sound—a self-aware glitch-art interpretation of a spooky moonlit cemetery scene. Behold, goth has entered the 21st century and it might not be what you were expecting. (HB)
(FDH / P. Trash)

CHÜKO – "Lo-Life" EP
With the bass super cranked, pounding drums, and the guitars and vocals drenched to all heck, one song feels like it's an Albini-inspired, yet comfortable at a house show type of rock, and is kinda tight. Flip that fucking record over and you've got some super weird arpeggio digital keyboard and chimes garbage that honestly could not end quickly enough. I'd check their rock shit out, though. (DZ)
(Pineapple Lung Cleanse)

CLEVELAND STEAMERS – "Best Record Ever" CD
This is a bunch of old Cleveland has-beens, the most notable of whom is CHEESE BORGER of the PINK HOLES, along with the youngins from ARCHIE AND THE BUNKERS. It's a pretty dull middle of the road glammy power pop ride with over enunciated vocals trying to tell some kind of a story or whatever...and I struggle to care about any of it. I guess this this is the third release of this masterpiece of a formula, but I wish Dad would have stayed in bed for this one and given me my 43 minutes back. (RO)
(Smog Veil)

CONTRAST ATTITUDE – "12 Track Compilation" 12"
This compilation was created for CONTRAST ATTITUDE's recent tour that devastated the west coast and includes their *Black Or White* EP, the title track to their *Stand Up And Fight* EP, and their material from their splits with SEE YOU IN HELL, FINAL BOMBS, and ASPECTS OF WAR. Active since 1998, Japan's CONTRAST ATTITUDE worship at the altar of Kawakami, creating killer metallic D-beat with a total fuck-the-world frantic energy. Despite being recorded between 2010 and 2014, the material here is consistently strong throughout and more varied in songwriting than many other D-beat bands. Don't miss this shit. (JD)
(Distort Reality)

THE CREEPS – "Old Crimes" LP
This Canadian band is now an adult, seeing that it was born around 18 years ago in 1999. This collection is a mid-career best of collection that includes their singles and EPs from 2009–2013 plus one unreleased song, "Shut Up And Drive." You're getting a fairly tight three-piece here that can probably really rock a tiny venue hard. You can hear the stage confidence in these recordings. The CREEPS have now put in their 10,000 hours and are experts at their specific sound, which sometimes

sounds like a goth band really trying to do the punk thing ("Car Crash") or a band who really wanted to be a DESCENDENTS cover band but accidentally wrote their own songs ("Over And Out"). (RH)
(It's Alive)

CRIMINAL CODE – "2534" LP

Having seen them a few times but not following them too closely, I can say that these Northwest chorus-punkers sound a lot more refined and clear on this album, whereas I recall their previous stuff being a little wilder. I like this shift. Sometimes it's hard for me to decide whether to call a thing post-punk or death rock, or, like, when do I throw in the word "goth"? I mean, what does post-punk even mean anymore? Does it mean goth now? What can I call it in order to satisfy the aspiring punk music buyer's desire for a world in which everything is tagged and generified to comply with the algorithms that accurately feed them the perfect (or so they think) streams of the kind of music that they know they like... but CRIM CODE sounds like a band that's been evolving their rainy Northwestern punk for years and have matured (sorry) and arguably have just released their best work to date. After throwing this on a few times throughout the week the vocal line in "Dismal Light" has had the earworm effect on me repeatedly—a huge feat. Also, the layout and packaging looks so much better than most things Deranged squirts out these days, so kudos for giving a shit about that. (MA)
(Deranged)

CROSTA – "Un Nou Ritual" EP

This Barcelona band broke up some five years ago, and this 7" is a release of their final three songs. These songs have a Pacific Northwest bleak-punk sound to them, layered with an X-inspired rock n roll vibe. Very cool stuff. (FS)
(De o Fora!)

CRVEL – "Sombras" LP

You hear shards of distorted noise and hoarse screams echoing from somewhere in the back of a dark cave off a deserted beach. Curious, you tiptoe carefully over the slippery rocks, finding your way in the dark. The sounds get louder and more familiar as you turn a corner into a hidden alcove in the cave, only to find a gang of spiky leather-and-studs clad gothic punks. The dank air is thick with glue and Aquanet. The *Sombras* album by CRVEL blasts from a battered boombox. Dense, claustrophobic punk from Yucatan. Chiming, melodic guitar lines lean heavily on the chorus effects, skating under hoarse, desperate cries from the gutter. Very atmospheric and somewhat timeless sounding. Could've come out anytime since about 1981. Some of the better gothic-influenced post-punk I've heard in a while, perhaps because it's raw and direct; recommended listening. (AM)
(Last Hour / Near Dark)

DARK BLUE – "Fight to Love / For You"

Side A is a tender, down-tempo Oi! ballad with a warm, wall-of-sound quality that is much less austere than you might expect from an Oi! ballad. Singer John Sharkey's III's deep, smooth vocals add a powerful richness to the tracks. While the band's earlier releases incorporated more post-punk effects, this single sticks to straightforward means with simply overdriven guitar and dramatic drum build-ups. Side B is DARK BLUE's slowed down and much more romantic interpretation of ANTI-NOWHERE LEAGUE's pogo-inducing track "For You." The cover sounds little like the original, and much like it could be a lost hit from the '80s—at home on a movie soundtrack alongside NEW ORDER and the PSYCHEDELIC FURS. (HB)
(12XU)

DARK HORSE – "Bomb Thrower" LP

Massive metallic crust with a penchant for earth-shaking European metalcore breakdowns. These Australians have been kicking for a while, taking their brand of hardcore through a slew of vinyl releases and tours abroad, and the experience is evident as their obvious power seems basically effortless...Just a few dudes doing what they were apparently born to do. Lazy comparisons might include: DISFEAR, ACME, (the good parts of early) HATEBREED; choice cut: "Drilling For Hard Truths," if only for that main fast riff, because...*damn.* (WN)
(self-released)

DEATH ENGINE – "Place Noire" LP

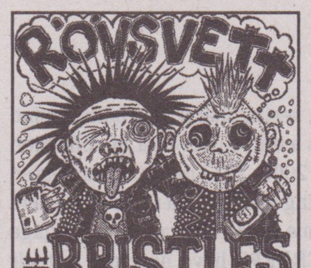
Oh France...DEATH ENGINE is a semi-legendary heavy rawk three-piece from Lorient. This is a slow and unrelenting dirge with gravelly vox, but somehow also super clean with intermittent melodic flourishes. I haven't really kept up with this scene, but I imagine they worship the Hydrahead Records roster. Makes me feel like I'm squarely back in a rock club and it's a punishing plodding mess of heaviness that I've heard before. Maybe try speeding it up, boys... (GB)
(Apocaplexy / Throatruiner)

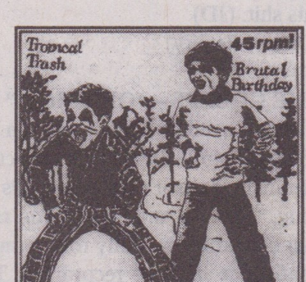
DEECRACKS – "Sonic Delusions" LP

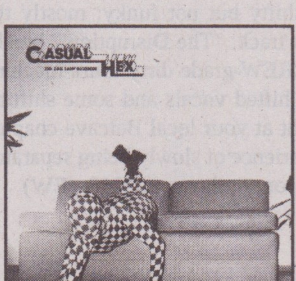
This is catchy as hell and energetic punk rock from Austria. If you're into Fat Wreck-type pop punk you will for sure fall in love. These guys write ridiculously good songs. Sounds like something straight out of a '90s party at the skatepark. At first I thought these guys were influenced by bands like SCREECHING WEASEL and TEENAGE BOTTLEROCKET, especially after hearing the song "Left Out Of Mind" (which is Ramones-core as fuck) only to find out two tracks later that the song "Montreal Nights" starts with the the iconic 1-2-3-4 count and is dedicated to the memory of TBR's drummer, Brandon Carlisle. Side A ends with an instrumental surf track "Mexican Stand-Off." Way to keep things interesting! Side B is just as good. Clean recording and gritty vocalist. This is great pop-punk! Oh and for a bonus track, a great version of EDDIE AND THE HOT RODS' "Do Anything You Wanna Do"! I love it! (DB)
(Pirates Press)

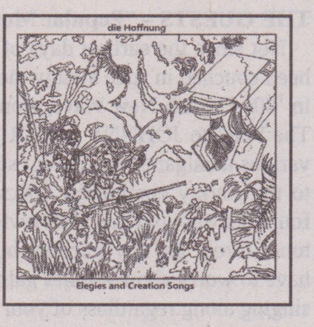
DEECRACKS – "Valentine" flexi

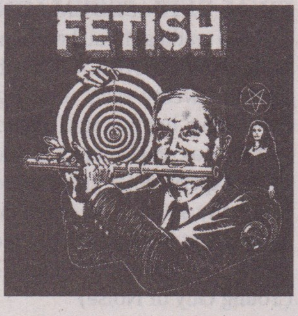
If you can find this red, heart-shaped flexi, it's certainly a fun thing to add to your collection, but it's in no way vital. The one song, "Valentine," appears on this Austrian band's recent full-length and does not seem to differ in any way, so this is really only good as a collector's pick up. It is fun to watch the heart spin for about the two minute thirty second run











time of this garage punk love song, though. Something something, be my Valentine, mumble mumble, leather jackets, yeah! (RH)
(Pirate's Press)

DIE HOFFNUNG – LP

I met Travis Fristoe when I was in my first year of college and he was studying abroad. I had read his fanzine *America?* and was delighted to meet a true representative of Gainesville punk / DIY in my sleepy English seaside college town. Travis was truly radical, kind, funny, and generous, with writing, with tapes and ideas. He played in so many Gainesville bands, all with differing ideas of what punk could mean. This is a band he joined after they had released their first LP, which I haven't heard, but this record specifically reminds me of that era of being in college in the mid '90s and listening to SLINT, NATIVE NOD, the HATED and LYNC, that desperate guitar sound. I have a great memory of walking around town with Travis hitting local garage sales and picking up ADVERTS and POP GROUP records for a pound each and marveling at how the English did not value their punk history. Recommended Gainesville recordings! (LG)
(Belladonna)

DOA – "Fight Back" CD

One of my all-time fave punk bands here with their latest full length. This rocks pretty good with the politics upfront as usual. This current trio lineup is great live, and they keep up the energy and tempo on these studio recordings. Not much "rock" dabbling guitar wise on this one, this one's a punker. (RL)
(Sudden Death)

DUKE NUKEM – LP

DUKE NUKEM are from St. Petersburg, Russia and play total unapologetic grebo punk'n'roll. They're named after a video game (totally un-punk), but give 'em a chance. Their singer is a spitting, biting, gnashing Eastern European Sakevi, and some of this resembles a GISM fully embracing their MAIDEN riffing side, spending their days doing cheap crank and driving muscle cars. The cover art is a delightful vision of apocalyptic biker and skulls—unholy hell. The songs "Insanity" and "Tonight" as well as their namesake track are the winners here, but the whole package will leave a greasy jizz-stained skidmark on your soul. Arrgh. (RO)
(Kamaset Levyt)

ELWAY – "For The Sake Of The Bit" CD

I have to say, I always have a bit of a soft spot for smart bastards who can actually rock. For the uninitiated (this is, I believe, their third full length—though, clocking in at eight tracks in well under half an hour, it's not that lengthy), the WEAKERTHANS would probably be the most apt description, both musically and lyrically. Yup, they are that good, and here's the proof. Certainly can't argue with "Nobody Goes into Meteorology for the Sunny Days" as the song title of the year. My only complaint is the (relative) brevity. With stuff this classy, you always want more. (RK)
(Red Scare)

ELYSIAN – "In The Red Light Tower" EP

The sound of flange makes me want to leave the room. When will it end? I feel like this has been the sound of punk for the past ten years! We are stuck in the early '80s politically and musically. Retrogression is eternal. If you don't have this response to this particular brand of post-punk, this 7" will delight and enchant; it is BELGRADO-esque and is not a bad record by any stretch, for the genre it's interesting and experimental rather than corny. But I am ready for a new idea. In short, this one is not for me. (LG)
(Saudade)

EUREKA CALIFORNIA – "Roadrunners" CD

This band is actually from Athens, GA despite being named after the Northern California coastal city. They're a two-piece who play noisy indie rock along the ways of SUPERCHUNK and the PIXIES with a more stripped down feel. This band caught my attention with a prior release and this sounds good as well with their tuneful songwriting. (RL)
(Happy Happy Birthday To Me)

FAUX DEPART – "Au Pied Du Mur" LP

What a great LP from this new-ish French band...Hyperactive, scratchy punk rock played with intelligence and wit. The songs are infectious: they have the immediacy of the MARKED MEN or the REDS, but with the minimalist approach of '77 upstarts like the ADVERTS or ATV. There's a continuity of pace (fast!) and tone throughout the record, each song entering and leaving in a burst of kinetic energy, but all brimming with personality and verve. In the mirror-world punk *Eurovision* 2018 that I'm hosting in my head, it's France—*dix points* from the Scottish judge. I declare FAUX DEPART the winners. (AM)
(Mutant)

FCKR – "Rattenblick" EP

FCKR rides a thin line between catchy and goofy minimalist, almost-poppy punk songs with flourishes of synth here and there. Their tone is close to clean and sterile with a hint of VENTURES, but it really more in line with DEVO. Each song brims with energy with the vocals way up front in a way that makes me really wish I understood any German at all. I can see a total pogo party easily happening at any of their shows. (GH)
(Kopperation)

FETISH – "Take the Knife / A House is Not A Motel"

"Take the Knife" is everything you'd hope for coming from LONG KNIFE and POISON IDEA folks: that special ramped-up, rock-fueled hardcore with a dark side that seems to be intuitive in the hearts of certain Portland hardcore punk musicians. If *War All the Time* and *Feel the Darkness* are embedded in your consciousness, this song will light up the good-feeling parts of your brain. I'm not a LOVE listener, but the B-side is a cover of them, and seems to be an apt rendition under the previously mentioned descriptors. Two more things: looking forward to "the album" if that's in the works, and it's so wonderful to hear Thee Slayer Hippy's distinctly "mind-blowing while still tasteful" drumming again. (MA)
(Beach Impediment)

FINAL EXIT / SEDEM MINUT STRACHU – split EP

Keep reading if you hate bands that write songs! Japanese noise grind freak show FINAL EXIT has been making goofy rock / noise collages for over twenty years now. I got to give it to these guys keeping at it for so long, but this stuff sounds like a mince-core MR. BUNGLE, and that's not a compliment. Slovakia's SEDEM MINUT STRACHU brings us an experimental grindcore ode to heavy metal martyr Cliff Burton. It literally sounds like when drunk teenagers try to play METALLICA at their first band practice. I mean, crossed out music symbols are cool and all, but this is ridiculous. (BA)
(Young Guy of Noise)

F.U.K. – "Road Kill / I Got A Head"

"Nothin' tastes better than fresh road kill!" Fucked Up Kids—you get me. The story here's all loosy-goosy: unearthed '77 scuzz from Detroit, boasting some favorable connections to MISSION OF BURMA and DESTROY ALL MONSTERS. The sonic similarities most definitely favor the latter: scabby guitars, primitive and less Stoogoid than DAM, but with a tuff-gal vocal bite that's brings us all home (to hell!). The spaced-out flip, "I Got A Head," is actually knockin' me out a wee bit more than the forceful A-side, but I'm a shitty weirdo, so what do I know? If obscure punk bullshit is your life-force, nab quickly. (MC)
(Hozac)

GAITZE – 12" EP

This Basque hardcore unit offers up a grip of tracks that never reinvent the wheel but equally never flag in energy or catchiness. This is very basic stuff, cleaving closely to an '80s European hardcore template complete with cool melodic breaks and reinforced by a bare-bones but powerful recording. The Side A closer, "Bizi Nahi Dut," is a standout, starting with a menacing street-crawling riff and chanted vocal before building into a chaotic all-out attack. The structure and appeal of this is so broad that it's hard to pick out a specific influence that the band can be compared to beyond the usual '80s Spanish bands with a bit of IRON CROSS / AGNOSTIC FRONT post-Oi! in the mix, though they definitely share the qualities of toughness and directness possessed by a band like ORDEN MUNDIAL. There's a ton of passion here, carried mostly in the dual vocals, but every player is bringing it throughout. This is really fucking good. It's just hard to pin down, a situation that is not helped by the super nondescript artwork and packaging. (AU)
(Enfermos / Karrazka Banaketak / Mal-Mai / No Thanks!)

THE GOON MAT AND LORD BENARDO – "Take Off Your Clothes" CD

Best band name I've come across in a while. Two Belgian guys belting out the blues with a lo-fi trashy sound. While I am always humored by Europeans invoking the spirit of America's Southern Blues musicians, these two do it well. It sounds authentic but with a nice punk rock twist. (CK)
(Voodoo Rhythm)

THE GUESTS – "Popular Music" LP

Not since the earliest days of STEREOLAB has leftist propaganda been couched in such syrupy melodies. The GUESTS' sound is rooted in '80s English New Wave, from synth-pop on tracks like "'Watching The War" to JOHNNY MARR jangle on "Flotsam And Jetsam," and various amalgams of adjacent styles elsewhere. It's probably only due to the starkly communist lyrics and DIY sensibilities that this even found its way into the *MRR* review bin. Political records without good tunes rarely get any traction, but that is not a problem the GUESTS have to worry about—tunes galore on this platter and they'll have you singing along regardless of your place on the political spectrum. (AM)
(Wilsuns)

HONEYMOON – "Trostlos" LP

After an introduction that led me to believe that I was about to learn about Europe's newest epic / atmospheric crust band, HONEYMOON launched into a massive collection of melodic punk masterpieces. Think '80s SoCal and BURNING LOVE and '00s Kobenhavn all at once, and all offered with a colossal recording. The 16ths alternating between the ride and hi-hat are a strange thing to take note of, but it's details like this that set *Trostlos* up to be one of the (or at least my) guiltiest pleasures. (WN)
(self-released)

THE HOT NASTIES – "The Ballad Of The Social Blemishes" EP

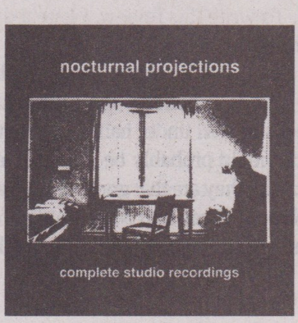
What d'ya Know?! Canada's HOT NASTIES decided not to call it quits and here's a new EP. Of course their 1980 EP is a benchmark for Canadian punk. Thirty-eight years later, they're a bit, uh, older. The tempos are a bit slower, the music a bit less abrasive. In practice it's poppier and pubbier, with the standout track "Fashion Show" channeling the 101ERS or those first few CLASH EPs. (GB)
(Ugly Pop)

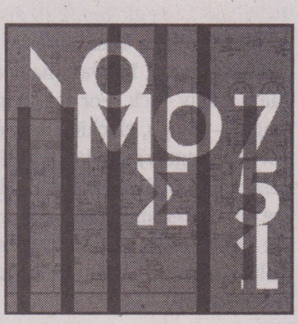
HUMAN ADULT BAND – "Sonic Enlightenment" LP

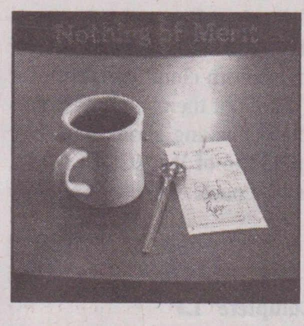
On this newest LP from New Jersey's incredibly prolific HUMAN ADULT BAND, they start off with a side-long slow jam that is equal parts spaghetti western, space-out-stare-into-the-fifth-dimension and BRUTOK FORNICK AND THE IMMORTAL MICE MEN. It's one of those things that really goes nowhere, but can be nice to listen to when you're in the right mood (and I am), but be warned...there is a flute *and* a rain stick. Side B starts off in the same vein, but soon delves into bombastic noise and cacophonous post-rock, swaying between freeform experimental dirges and semi-structured, calculated attacks. Sometimes it's in your face and caustic while other times, it flows by like a calm river, but it's all engaging throughout. This is my favorite release by them so far. (GH)
(Third Uncle)

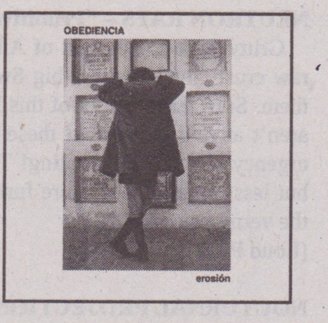
INDUSTRIAL HOLOCAUST / LOTUS FUCKER – split EP

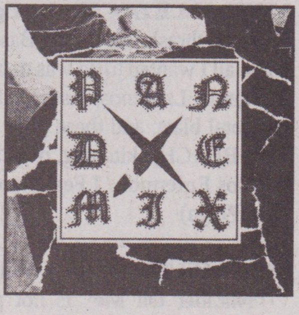
Wild fucking split here! Brazil's INDUSTRIAL HOLOCAUST, active since the early '90s, should be well known to grind freaks for their classic grindcore sound, which pulls a lot from stalwarts of the











genre such as EXTREME NOISE TERROR, SORE THROAT, and early NAPALM DEATH. Like those acts, their songs aren't relegated to just being excuses for blastbeats, but despite their brevity they are all dynamic and wild. LOTUS FUCKER from the US are chaotic in a much different way, with feedback and noise threatening to collapse their speedy take on hardcore. Both sides of this split will leave you spinning and reeling. (JD)
(SPHC)

THE INSERTS – LP

Raw punk out of Berlin with squeaky clean REGISTRATORS guitar and the sickest vocal cadence of KLEENEX / LILIPUT. There's not one damn song on this LP that I didn't think ripped. (CR)
(Hundemann)

KARPATOS – "Dead Punk / Niebla Densa" 12"

I'm only two records into my reviews this month, but I am pretty certain that everything else I listen to is going to be a waste of time—holy *fuck* this thing is a monster. Supreme mid-tempo punk damage of the highest order, with tortured guitars, the occasional thrift sore organ (used to supreme and terrifying effect) and an ability to take the simplest of songs and make them mesmerizing. And amongst all of that...Spanish language vocals that seem like they are trying to free themselves from hell more that trying to catch a groove, yet they still catch that groove. This is simultaneously the meanest, the simplest and the most artistically advanced sonic creation you will find in these pages. Even though I guess this came out almost two years ago, I suggest you do not sleep. (WN)
(Bomba / Enfermos / Me Cago En Dios / Mayo / No Thanks!)

LAWSUIT MODELS – "Off The Pavement" LP

If you really like the LAWRENCE ARMS but think that they've not released enough albums, then this LP is the perfect artificial thickening agent to shove into your pop punk gravy and pretend you've got more of it. Slather this shit all over your Chicago punk diner food (ignore that this band is actually from Denver). You know how it's nice to have a soundtrack while you're in the shower getting all soapy, but it's really hard to really hear the music because of water noises all around your ear holes? Well this is that perfect, crisp pop punk that works well, because you don't really need to hang on to every second to know what's going on. It's pleasant background music with a snappy enough beat to nakedly twist and a wiggle too. Full disclosure: To write this review, I listened to this album while bathing. I recommend doing that too. (RH)
(Snappy Little Numbers)

LIP / NAG – split EP

This is an inspired pairing. I'm a big fan of NAG's combination of punk energy, post-punk angularity, and flat-out caveman bashing, and both of their songs here live up to my already high expectations. "Eye Level" is my favorite track on this split; it starts with a slow burn that me wanna start a slow-motion slam pit, then gives way into a brief but exhilarating full-on punk burst. The LIP side complements NAG nicely. I enjoy the slightly spacey-sounding vocals, especially the male / female interplay on "Control." NAG is the winner here for me, but that's no knock on LIP, who are pretty outstanding in their own right. Strong recommend from me on this one. (MF)
(Space Taker)

LOUDER THAN DEATH – LP

LTD is made up of the brothers Wood (SPITS), the Khan family (as in KING KHAN and his daughter, SABA LOU) and Drew Owen (aka DD OWEN of SICK THOUGHTS). What purports to be an exercise in high-grime punkiocity is actually a genuinely weird trip, albeit one where the in-joke indulgences are the guiding lights. "Play Safe" is the far-and-away choice moment if ya ask me: an odd-ditty with Saba Lou's sweetness butting up against the SPITS' inspired gutter weirdness. "Half A Dick" is perhaps the most delinquent moment, though there's some half-chub competition on some other tunes. Genius at play, it would seem, but a record for super-devotees only. (MC)
(In The Red)

LOUDMOUTH – "Easy Tiger!" CD

Boss Tuneage is a pretty reliable UK label for the pop punk diehards. This is this UK band's second full length and it's full of sing-along anthems. Lots of old school influences *à la* the CLASH and the RUTS but also BAD RELIGION and SOCIAL DISTORTION as well. Pretty solid stuff. (RL)
(Boss Tuneage)

MANIAC – "Dead Dance Club" LP

I think in fairness to everyone involved, I should disclose that I'm going into this one sort of not wanting to like it. Five seconds in and my worst fears are confirmed. The music is okay and the vocals seem to mixed too low. But hold on a second. Maybe the vocals aren't mixed too low. And maybe it's super catchy, in a kind of sing-along post-punk thing. Or is it more mod? Anyway, we're just into song two and I think I'm starting to really enjoy this one. It reminds me of another band I like quite a bit, MYSTERY DATE. Yeah, this thing is mid-tempo and catchy. And it's got a softness to it. (Don't let that bring you down.) This is a solid release and definitely worth looking for. (KK)
(Dirt Cult / Hover Craft)

MENTIRA – "Mentira / História sem graça"

Open-ended, synth-driven debut single from Barcelona's MENTIRA, recorded in São Paulo. Two compact tracks that evoke a mechanical creepiness and sense of disorientation. The inescapably generic quality of pre-programmed beats reminds us that we are nowhere because we are anywhere, while the alternating guy / gal spoken vocals bring individualism and personality into the mix. There's also a kind of silly and fun vibe which, when juxtaposed with the ominous repetition and eerie synth tones, creates a sense of totally unhinged dysphoric elation. The ultimate act of rebellion is to giggle in the face of annihilation. The record sleeve is caringly hand-stamped, suggesting that this is not some AI trick to lull us into passive submission. (HB)
(Dê o Fora)

METRALLETA – "Ez Da Egia, Gezurra Da" EP

Super thrash out of the Basque country. This reminds me of a time when all I wanted to do was tie a bandana around my head and run around in a circle. Like most fastcore, this shit has only two speeds: fucking fast and total blast, and these guys do it right. If you're a fan of FUCK ON THE BEACH, skitching, or 625 Records, then this is for you. (BA)
(Discos Enfermos / I Feel Good / In My Heart Empire / La Humanidad es la Plaga)

MINI MELTDOWNS – "Number On Me" EP

"Number On Me" is not punk, just pop sunshine and fuzzed distortion. Things however take a sharp turn with "Hospital" and "Why Can't I Be Straight" into bratty QUEERS terrain, and "Knife" with a head nod to BEATNIK TERMITES. This had me confused as to if this was a comp, which it's not. Hard to delineate what this band is about, but maybe that's their point. (CR)
(Good Land)

MOON BLOOD – "Violent Acts" EP

Pissed off and snotty pogo-punk with lots of old school hardcore. Sinead, the vocalist, screams anger and attacks all that is vile in humanity. This is raw hardcore punk done to lo-fi perfection. Side B starts with the song "Shroud" and continues with the song "Vile," both characterized by slower tempos but energized with negativity and frustration. Ugly, dirty, and anxious. I feel like this band just kicked me in the face, in a good way. (DB)
(Running In Place)

NEO NEOS – "EP MK2 'Sailor Suit and Machine Gun'" EP

A seven inch of serious angry nerd punk music. There's something about the bizarre synth-string stabs that litter these songs and the way the bass sounds like it's in a race with the guitar that screams bedroom project / one person band. The vocals are snotty and the songster sparse and angular, like if someone wished the *Hardcore DEVO* stuff was actually hardcore, or thought the first AMERICAN HATE seven inch was too burly. This is great, and the liner notes give "Hanx" to Anime so you know this is the good stuff. (LP)
(Cultural)

NEUROOT – "Obuy and Die" LP

A new album from a classic Dutch anarcho hardcore punk band that previously gave us a totally killer demo, EP, and LP (debatable due to metallic leanings, but I like it) in the '80s. So we're gonna forget all of that right now because it's 2018 and this is nothing like any of that. The only thing that's consistent from their early days is the lefty politics. Anti consumerism, anti-fascist, anti-war screeds over vaguely heavy mid-tempo rock like HELMET or some later radio hit era CORROSION OF CONFORMITY, complete with wah pedal and nu-metal beats. I mean, old dudes gotta rock out, that's fine, but by all means do not expect to like this if you like their other records. (MA)
(Civilisation)

NEUTRON RATS – "Primitive Past // Nuclear Future" LP

Gritty Euro D-beat out of Albany, New York. These dudes deliver raw crusty thrash with a big Swedish mushroom cloud looming over them. Sure, there's a lot of this kind of thing out there, and these riffs aren't anything new, but these guys totally fucking shred, and their urgency keeps them exciting! They remind me of WARCOLLAPSE, but less brooding and more furious. It's like nuclear winter, and only the vermin survive! (BA)
(Loud Punk)

NOCTURNAL PROJECTIONS – "Complete" LP

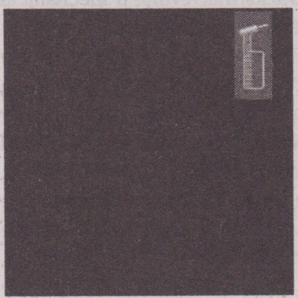
This reissue collects the singles and 12" of a storied NZ post-punk group featuring brothers Peter and Gordon Jefferies, future members of THIS KIND OF PUNISHMENT who also got reissued recently. It's haunting and beautiful, that eternal classic doomed sound, obviously owing a debt to JOY DIVISION and the SOUND, but making its own neural pathways somewhere between dark pop-wave and post-punk. If you are consumed by such sounds, this is an essential release; it's a beautiful package and sounds incredible, and is documentation of the global spread of the post-punk ideal. I prefer my post-punk to be of the SWELL MAPS/ PRAG VEC variety over than these bleak doomed sounds, but I know I am of a minority with this perspective. My favorite PETER JEFFERIES release is his solo tapes that were comped about five years ago, which I would recommend hunting down. This is obviously a fantastic record, and document of a time. (LG)
(Dais)

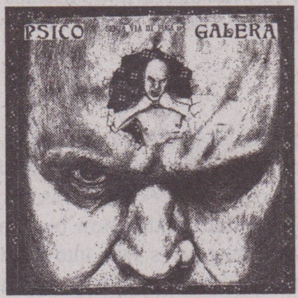
NOCTURNAL PROJECTIONS – "Inmates in Images" LP

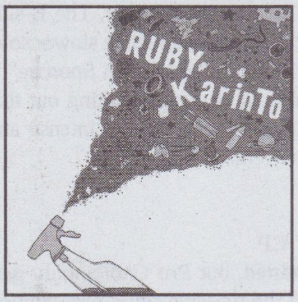
2018 has somehow turned into the year to catch up with all things related to the early work of New Zealand's brothers Jefferies, between two different NOCTURNAL PROJECTIONS compilations and the recent reissues of the first two THIS KIND OF PUNISHMENT LPs. Unlike the more experimental and ponderous music of their post-PROJECTIONS project, the music here is fast and desperate and propulsive. A lot of people draw a straight line from JOY DIVISION to this band, which is fair; there's plenty of broken up and arpeggiated bass riffs and a sparse and jerky kind of guitar playing that Graeme Jefferies lays down on some tunes, but in most cases this isn't a band with patience enough to play with a lot of empty space. Peter Jefferies' vocals are always wild, and here is no exception, a really singular and dramatic kind of cadence and a way of committing a lot of spite and vibrato into some really strange and unsettling melodies. There's a restlessness to this band that's captured especially well here. This LP collects recordings from a handful of live shows in New Zealand, all pretty raw but some that are really fantastic (the most scratchy sounding song on here was recorded by CHRIS KNOX, figures). I might like this even more than the studio recordings, flubbed notes and all. Highly recommended for fans of early NZ punk or dour and unhappy music from any time or place. (EW)
(Dais)

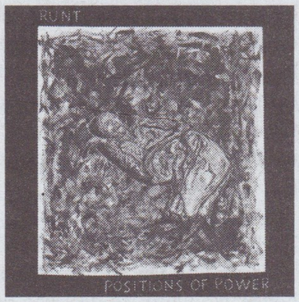
NOMOΣ 751 – LP

Heavily spastic electro-punk from Greece. Somehow mixing the









styles of CONEHEADS and the SPITS. There is a mutant-DEVO force pulsating throughout the album, and it makes you feel crazy. But sometimes you just gotta have your brain twisted. Calculated chaos. It's like being spun out and watching someone mess around with a Rubik's Cube. What' going on?!? I don't know, but I can't stop staring. (FS)
(Slovenly)

NORK ZER?! – EP
Hilarious Spanish hardcore / thrash outfit! I can't understand most of what they're saying, but this is super tight no frills metal-punk thrash with intro songs, super-fast circle pit rips, and heavy mosh. Great production that captures both their sense of humor and their commitment to thrash. I bet they're a blast to see live! (GB)
(CKUD / Lengua Armada / Mal-Mal / Torture Chamber / XCementerioX)

NOTHING OF MERIT – "Sleep of Reason" LP
During the guitar intro of the first song on this LP, I though "this is gonna sound really cool when the bass kicks in." There's no bass player. Fair enough. NOTHING OF MERIT hails from Houston, TX, and the band once stated that they formed because no one in their city was playing fast, political hardcore, which is a mind-blowing statement. NOTHING OF MERIT has filled that fictitious void by playing mid-tempo rock music with off-kilter sax accompaniment that sometimes gives it a *Funhouse*-era STOOGES vibe. Their political lyrics run the gamut of going to the store to buy paint, hanging out in a candy shop, and the dilemma of losing friends. They have a song called "Let's Get Gay," which is about as stupid as you can imagine, but not even as close to as offensive as one might think. They also cover the BIG BOYS ("We're Not in It to Lose") but made the decision to omit the verses, thereby erasing it of all context. I don't really care to trash a self-released record because I recognize the time and energy that goes into making it, but I was not jazzed by this and I'll leave it at that. (Sidenote: the band asked that this record be reviewed by Matt Seward, but that guy writes for a different magazine that rhymes with the words "Lazer Lake." Both he and I are from Alabama though, so close enough.) (GH)
(self-released)

OBEDIENCIA – "Erosión" LP
There's something so relatable about these songs. Is it the vulnerability of clear but rough-around-the-edges vocals, delivered with such unselfconscious urgency? These feelings must be expressed or we will all explode. OBEDIENCIA interprets punk romantically and fatalistically, along the lines of Scandinavian melodic punks MASSHYSTERI or NO HOPE FOR THE KIDS, or more recently, Oakland's SILENT ERA. There is nothing left to lose but each other. Enough minor chords to encompass all the anomie, and enough satisfying pop resolutions to remind you that there is redemption in collectively naming the pain. Don't sleep on this, you probably need it more than you realized. (HB)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

OVERSIGHT – "Transparency" EP
The first release from this Las Vegas hardcore band. They play '90s style metallic thrash. The recording is lo-fi and fortunately the guitars don't get too metal. The singer grunts out his serious lyrics. Unfortunately, there seems to be no long hair to whip around in time to the tunes. Hopefully the audience will provide it. (CK)
(Running In Place)

PANDEMIX – "Rank & File / Second Opinion"
Two songs of tightly wound, fiercely political hardcore punk. I believe PANDEMIX are from Boston, but this record is making me think of Pittsburgh's ANTI-FLAG for some reason—maybe something about the impassioned vocals. Lyrically, both songs deal with systematic abuse—"Rank and File" at the hands of cops, "Second Opinion" within the clutches of the medical industrial complex. (AM)
(Dirt Cult)

PERKY TITS / PISSE – Split 10" EP
Try to get a sense of the joy I'm feeling as a 39-year-old man, sitting alone, reviewing a split 10" featuring a band called PERKY TITS, in 2018 on planet Earth. Anyway, PERKY TITS deliver shit-brain, bare-bones punk slop—garage enough to please the adult contemporary sect, but not quite punk enough to provoke the young'uns. PISSE attempt to thrill, with a death-disco eeriness that tip-toes up to RUDIMENTARY PENI abrasion, only to retreat back to safety far too quickly. Uninteresting at every turn. (MC)
(Phantom)

PRIVATE SECTOR – "The Cost of Living" EP
Kind of obsessed with this thing. The cover art had me expecting, I dunno, minimal synth punk I guess. Instead, this is truly just pure, simple, dumb-as-shit punk rock with a UK DIY influence. The recording sounds like shit, and they seem to be testing how many times and how many different ways they can repeat "survival is killing me." The B-side includes a couple more simple lo-fi songs, including a cover of the PRATS' "Disco Pope," and they're both solid tracks, but they can't really hold a candle to "Survival Is Killing Me." Probably because it's one of the best songs I've heard all year. I just played it like six times in a row and now everybody else in the compound probably hates me. Fuck. Get this. (MF)
(Byllepest)

PSICO GALERA – "Senza Via De Fuga" EP
What in the fucking fuck is this? First thought is that the weird vocal effects and over-the-top guitar solos recall the post-GOBLIN Claudio Simonetti recordings. Then I immediately think that this is a more stripped down distillation of all the best parts from the bad thrash metal-influenced NEGAZIONE and UPSET NOISE records. Then again, what this fuck is this? It's a band out of time, experimenting like later GISM but maintaining a strong hardcore connection throughout. Turns out it's three Italian hardcore lifers with a Canadian who got lost very far from home. This is weird, it's compelling, it's maybe the most fascinating Italian release since the FOGNA EP. There's a lot of punk out there that's trying very very hard to be "weird." Fuck that shit, this record is effortlessly

bizarre, and it's easily one of the best I've heard this year. The B-side drops off a bit with one ultra-short attack and a less effective slower song but the A-side's 1-2 combo of "La Prima Volta" and "Mani Sporche" is completely unique and un-fuck-with-able. It is worth pointing out that the graphic design for the record is killer as well, just as intense and unhinged as the music contained within. Remarkable. (AU)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

RADIUM GRRRLS – "Pro Choice" EP
I was sold the minute "Disorder" started, but *Pro Choice* only gets better. No words to describe how well the massive sonic presentation suits the band, serving to make an already powerful outfit simply deadly. Beyond bombastic hardcore with brilliant riffs and monolithic breakdowns that never seem to last more than two seconds and blasts that make your heart stop...And the lyrics are a fuckin' bullseye. To the point like a fist, RADIUM GRRLS are so brutally honest in every way and will still blow the damn doors off every stupid macho hardcore / crust outfit in your town. There is seriously nothing that I could want from a punk record that cannot be found on this EP. (WN)
(Adagio 830)

RED CITY RADIO – "Skytigers" CD
A five song release from this Oklahoma band. A bit slicker and more layered than their early days, which would draw HOT WATER MUSIC comparisons. These are the best songs from these guys since they lost their second lead vocalist a couple of years ago. Now drifting into singer-songwriter territory, this has an uplifting groove with some cool songs and some great playing. (RL)
(Red Scare)

RED MASS – "Rat Race" EP
This is a French-Canadian band with a revolving cast of singers who each get a turn or two on this 7". There's a lot of variety here, so you may find something you like on this record if you are forced to spend enough time with it. Side A is a little boring and corny until the second verse, when a fun little bee-swarm keyboard tone starts swarming over the otherwise uncompelling riffs, turning a pretty standard tune into some kind of outer space music (though you could really make any song better by shooting it into outer space). After a surprisingly fast couple of minutes, this song fades out into a filtered out drum'n'bass break, a hint of things to come. Things improve a bit on the B-side by way of the band playing faster and the guitarist going out of tune and playing with a slide (not in a rockabilly sort of way, though there may be some crossover appeal for this band), then following up with some legitimately weird PRODIGY-esque junglist music. If any of the above sounds appealing, there may be better and cheaper ways to get your fix, but at least now you know this is here for you. (EW)
(It's Trash!)

REVEREND BEAT-MAN AND THE NEW WAVE – "Blues Trash" CD
REVEREND BEAT-MAN is still preaching the blues in his own trashy way, this time appearing with his pious cohorts the NEW WAVE. The music is appropriately dirgey and minimalist with a "you're going to hell" vibe. The Reverend's voice is lo-fi and somber. It's also less preachy than when he started out. I am ready for my penance. (CK)
(Voodoo Rhythm)

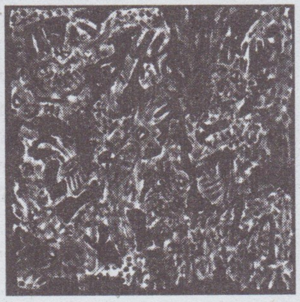
RIÑA – "Aqui No Eres Nadie" EP
Furious and mandatory hardcore punk from Mexico City! This sounds every bit as engaging and truly pissed as their excellent demo. Such an intense and direct vocal delivery—hits me in that special spot in the throat, choking on adrenaline. I also sense an evolution in songwriting since their last output, keeping it fresh, but the magic is all in their confrontational, unwavering attack. A truly special and "must-see" band. (MA)
(Thrilling Living / World Gone Mad)

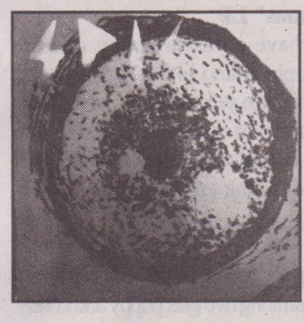
THE ROCKET DOGZ – "Bad Blood" CD
This "psycho" three-piece (replete with stand up bass and semi-acoustic guitar) are from the Czech Republic, formed in 2008, and this here is their second full-length. Their English is flawless, and fortunately for my tastes at least, they are considerably more MISFITS than METEORS, more FACE TO FACE (albeit with some nice reverby guitar in places) than the CRAMPS. Actually, despite the usual skulls and Lucky cliches abounding, I thoroughly dug this. Excellent tunes, harmonies, and it all rocks along quite nicely, even the couple of ballads. Fuck, mebbe I'll have to start sporting one of them KING KURT quiffs. (RK)
(PHR)

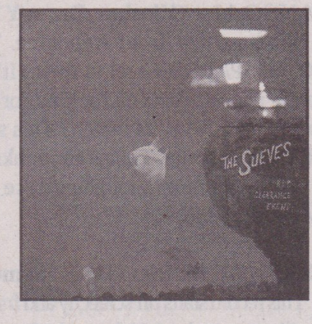
RUBY KARINTO – LP
Celebratory experimental pop sounds that make me think of that moment in the early '80s when bands like MAXIMUM JOY and FAMILY FODDER or PRAG VEC took the DIY notions of punk and used them to their own ends. Danceable joyous experimental music sung in English / Japanese with radical playground chant qualities, this is a sound that's rambunctious and free, more no wave than skronk, but truly delightful to listen to. Fans of SHOPPING and LES GEORGES LENINGRAD should check it out! (LG)
(Hozac)

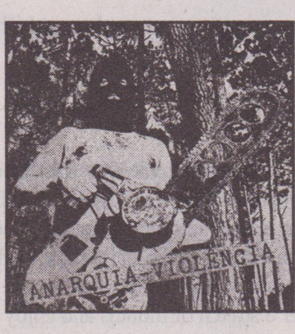
RUNT – "Positions of Power" LP
It's always weird when a band just hits you upside the fucking head when you weren't expecting it. RUNT takes the typical tools of punk and bends and shapes it to their own will rather than letting history define their sound. While I hear a Crass Records influence, they build off of that framework and take it into their own direction with a singer who exudes pure actual fucking unrestrained rage and bile rather than some boy who was practicing along to VOID in his bedroom mirror. You know what I mean? Like, actually pissed about the shit of this world and not following a script. They get to the point in each song with riffs that almost seem too simple to be this good. Bookending both sides of the album with the same song (although the final version is a little slower) seemed like an odd choice to me, but it makes the whole thing feel cohesive and complete. Perfect LP here. (GH)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

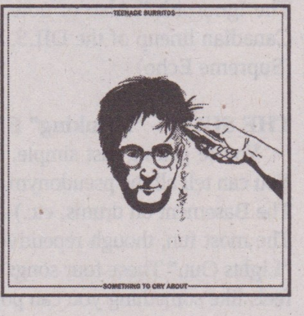
SATÉ LITE RECORDS











SATÉLITE – LP

Starting out with the unstoppably fierce track "Ojos en las paredes," Madrid's SATÉLITE drenches an aggressive but straightforward mid-tempo punk sound in chorus and reverb, before venturing into more haunting vocal arrangements and precise post-punk percussion for the rest of the record. Vocalist Raya's voice blends seamlessly with the melodic but ethereal bass lines, and a sprinkling of experimental, unorthodox interludes recall the straight-faced agitation of LILIPUT. Very much in the same vein as the first RAKTA record, and definitely likely to be in heavy rotation among the darkwave crowd. (HB)
(Discos Enfermos / No Thanks)

SEVEN DAYS OF SAMSARA – "1998-2018" 2xLP

When reviewing a retrospective compilation in a (relatively) limited medium like *MRR,* do you base that review on content or on context? Both are (equally) important, so where does a reviewer focus their attention? *Content:* Appropriately dated epic emotional hardcore that will stop your heart when they open it up, but definitely not afraid of the much maligned quiet(er) side of '90s basement scene/s. The introspection comes from melodic guitars instead of artificially anguished vocals, and serves as an often welcome respite from the band's all out assault. As many of these recordings are fifteen+ years old, the quality and sounds vary from session to session and might require a (small) "settling in" period when the listener moves from the *A Reason To Sing* CD EP to the COBRA KAI split to the SINCE BY MAN split, but that lack of sterility is a part of what makes the band (and the era) so compelling even (especially) now. I legitimately cannot think of a more honest sounding band—SDOS take metallic basement hardcore and introspective emo and make everything sound like it was all meant to live under the same roof...And then they just step on the gas and drive the shit through a wall. *Context:* SEVEN DAYS OF SAMSARA didn't put Milwaukee on the map. Elder punks took care of that in the '80s, and the the future generations made sure that Cream City was a necessary stop throughout the next decade. But the people in this band, the music they created, and the scene they fostered, were absolutely essential to a (still) thriving DIY scene for many many years. As a band and as individuals, their contributions cannot be understated. As a friend and a fan, I cannot understate how good it is—not to just hear these songs collected on one release, but to hear how fuckin' *amazing* they are. Just like I remember them...but better. Worth noting that everything here is packaged perfectly, with a full list of shows and tons of flyers and nerd related release specifics, like a retrospective should be. Recognize the power in actual community, and then seek out this record. (WN)
(self-released)

SHOPLIFTERS – "Forgiver" EP

Whoa, this sounds old as fuck! Like they're inspired by not only HÜSKER DÜ, but by stuff like the BUCK PETS, too. This has a few nice moments, and it definitely has a catch here and there, but it's pretty clean cut, polished, dad punk with no bite. Oh, and it took five fucking labels to put it out. (DZ)
(Bartolini / Brassneck / Pop Kid / Waterslide / White Russian)

SIAL – 12"

Straight outta Singapore, SIAL offer up seven tracks of crushing hardcore punk sung in the Malay language. The music leans into the heavy distortion of the crasher crust tradition, but the looping, hypnotic nature of the song writing recalls bands like LA MISMA and UNA BESTIA INCONTROLABLE, drum-driven and given to a stomping mid-tempo attack. Vocalist Siti Fatimah has been compared elsewhere to Chitose from the COMES and I can definitely endorse that comparison; they share the same clarity of delivery and controlled, shaking rage. The DISCHARGE-meets-WIRE jitter of "Leta" is a definite highlight (how many times do you get a chance to put those two band names together?!), as is the eardrum-annihilating dirge ("Jikik") that closes the record, carried by the massively charismatic vocal performance and the cymbal-shattering attack of the drummer. I don't say this often, but this record is way too damn short. I could've gone for another seven tracks easily. SIAL are a great band, who I hope are going on to do more great things. (AU)
(La Vida Es Un Mus)

SKEPTIC? – "Hornet's Nest" LP

These Southern boys have been tearing it up for quite awhile, and I can't say I've ever heard of them. It's my loss for sure because this is some blistering uber-tight hardcore that reminds me of RANCID VAT, LIFE'S HALT and ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT all spit fried and covered in gravy. The musicianship is cohesive in the way only folk who have lived and sweated in a box together for years can pull off, and the songs don't let up for an Alabama minute. "Lit Up," "Countdown," "Company Man," and their weird take on a WOODIE GUTHRIE song (just to show you they're no hicks) are highlights to a much worthwhile spin. Rage. (RO)
(self-released)

S.P.I.C. – "Policía" EP

Raw-as-fuck and trashy hardcore from NYC that feels vital and alive as it practically jumps off the vinyl. It sounds so out of control and on the edge of collapse at all times in the same way as those early CRAZY SPIRIT recordings. Most songs are screamed in Spanish, railing against racist fucks, shitty punks, living the fucking chaos and living in fear of the future. Ten songs of actual, living, breathing chaos on one little record. Get it. (GH)
(Huayno Amargo / Sin Temores)

THE STIFFS – "Fuck You" EP

OMG. There's an EP by Canuck pre-SUBHUMANS outfit the STIFFS! I don't know how they fit seven songs on a 7" EP, and it still destroys most things I've heard from Canada. This is a bit rougher and punker than SUBHUMANS, as if somehow that early Joey Shithead DOA sound just oozed in circa 1978. Obviously they were listening to the DAMNED too; here there's almost a straight guitar solo rip from them. The recording is def pretty lo-fi, which I'm counting as a bonus, but if you like that spick and span clean sound of the SUBHUMANS LP you might be surprised. The sonics are more like "Triumph Of

The Ignoroids." Also of note, drummer would go on to play with the Canadian lineup of the DILS. Get this thing already! (GB)
(Supreme Echo)

THE SUCK – "Drinking" EP

You're getting just simple, Ramones-style party rock with this band. You can tell all the pseudonym using band members (The Cola on vocals, The Basement on drums, etc.) are having a real fun time being in a band. The most fun, though repetitive, track on this EP is the vinyl-only track, "Lights Out." These four songs won't open any new worlds for you, but it feels like something you can pop on after a stretch of months and enjoy it again. It's perfect for preparing to be nostalgic for a time when everything was new and enjoyable that may not have even actually happened. (RH)
(Route 13)

THE SUEVES – "R.I.P. Clearance Event" LP

The first SUEVES LP from a few years ago took me by surprise with how much I enjoyed it. It's pretty standard garage punk, after all, but *Change Your Life* had a vocal style I really appreciated plus hooks with some real staying power, and I ended up coming back to it far more than I'd anticipated. On this, the band's second LP, I'm still enjoying the slightly nasal howl of the vocals, but the tracks just aren't there like I want them to be. It's an enjoyable enough way to spend my time, but I'm sorry to say that there's little here I'll remember tomorrow. I'm not writing off the band just yet, and fans of the genre will find a lot to like here, but I'm left a little disappointed. (MF)
(HoZac)

SYSTEMTIK VIØLENCE – "Anarquia-Violência" EP

Fuck, y'all, this is fucking awesome! Portuguese anarchist metalpunk with fucking fantastic political lyrics that challenge and uplift the listener even as they are brutally slain by chainsaw riffs to the face! Metalpunk is, let's be honest, usually a party genre, so it is super refreshing to find a band that embraces the style but harnesses it to a meaningful message. In many ways, this feels like a logical outgrowth of the mid-to-late '80s metallic anarcho- UK bands like REVULSION and LEGION OF PARASITES, or even SACRILEGE with a heaping dose of early CARCASS lo-fi brutality added to the mix. There's a ton to love about this record, all bolstered by solid graphic design (finally a band that actually pulls off the balaclavas in the band photo look!) and brilliant samples to boot. Fucking great! (AU)
(Raging Planet / Raw'N'Roll / Regulator / Ring Leader)

TANGO 14 – "Esto Es Nuestro" LP

Anti-fascist Oi! from Argentina, though on social media they claim to love "Futbol, Asado y Birra." I detect more of a coherent message than skinhead party lyrics on many songs, though the cover art is all soccer-themed and there are endless glass-raising moments. These guys fall more on the poppy and melodic side of Oi!, rather than the tough and gruff. There are still plenty of big futbol-chant gang vocal parts, complete with handclaps. A bit repetitive overall but quite catchy. (MA)
(Mendeku)

TANGO 14 – "Kioskos, Bares Y Tribunas" LP

Skinhead Oi! from Argentina. They have an extra poppy mid-era COCK SPARRER feel to them. It's all upbeat and lots of gang vocals on the chorus. Are you looking for an album to jam when your favorite soccer team wins its match? This stuff is meant to be fun and give you a big dumb smile. This is for punks who are all-in on the Oi! train. But if you're not into it, maybe you're just not drunk enough. (FS)
(Mendeku Diskak)

TEENAGE BURRITOS – "Something To Cry About" LP

This record starts off screechy and frantic then song two gets poppy and cutesy. It will return to that initial sound a few times, but mostly it settles in on the latter. It reminds me of that classic K Records sound. There are catchy melodies and pleasant harmonies. I am more curious about the cover drawing of '70s-era John Lennon having his head shaved. How does that relate to this music? (CK)
(Burger / Volar)

THE TEMPLARS – "Forgotten Souls" Flexi

If you're into Oi!, you probably one of two people. You either *love* the TEMPLARS or you really don't understand what the hype is all about. The TEMPLARS is a legendary NYC band that sounds like they're from 1980s UK. This is a picture flexi with their song "Forgotten Souls" off of their 2017 album *Deus Vult*. If you know this band, then you know what to expect, and you won't be disappointed, except for the fact that there's only one song. I hate flexis, but I love the TEMPLARS, so I enjoyed this, but I would recommend getting the actual record. (DB)
(Pirates Press)

TENTÁCULO – II EP

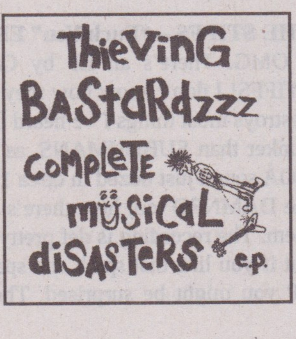
Spanish punks Tentáculo squeeze in five tight songs onto this EP, each one drenched in power pop harmonies and rock'n'roll licks. Side A, "El Abismo," is the winner on this one. (CR)
(Andalucia Uber Alles / Campary / Colilla / Malditos Vinilos / Muerte a Tipo / Mutant / Producciones Tudancas / The Safety Pin Generation / Tábano / Tormenta de Ideas)

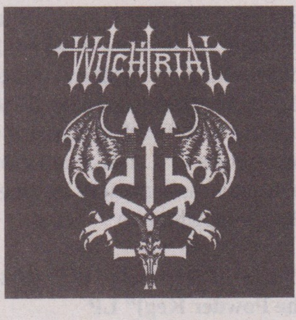
TERRITORIES – "Heart That Breaks" Flexi

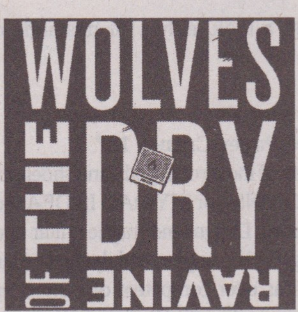
This has got to be, by far, that fanciest fuckin' flexi I ever set my eyes on. Clear garbage plastic with multicolor heart graffiti and the band's name in giant, clear, block letters makes me wonder if it would be cheaper, sound better and last more than five spins if it were pressed as a real 7" instead, but hey, whatever it takes to get someone to try it out, eh? Only one song to judge these folks on. Kinda repetitive, tough-guy-yet-sweet, pop punk with country-ish solos abound. Kinda like a midlife SOCIAL DISTORTION meets BOUNCING SOULS in their younger days, with a six-pack of whatever works. Old timers into pop punk might want to check this out. (DZ)
(Pirates Press)

THIEVING BASTARDZZZ – "Complete Musical Disasters" EP

Long before the days when improvisational shit-core grind bands had Facebook pages, before ANAL CUNT albums came with record







label one-sheets, before "noise not music" was a marketing slogan, there were a tiny handful of squat-dwelling, pants-pissing British drunks who decided music was shit and they weren't having it no more. From the feeble thews of these pasty misfits-among-misfits arose bands that "performed" but never, ever recorded like SKUMDRIBBERS and SEATS OF PISS. Sadly, those anti-commercial punk stalwarts faded away over time, replaced by pretenders who have the gall to possess enough technical ability to play blast beats and such. No more! THIEVING BASTARDZZZ are here to show the world how fucking terrible punk can really be. Culled from a sloppy, shitty rehearsal tape offered to the label without song titles or any other identifying information, this sixteen song(?) ripper contains no coherent riffs, very few parts played by all three instrumentalists in tandem and some of the worst vocals committed to vinyl in the modern era. If you don't buy this record you will probably regret it. If you do buy it you definitely will. Highest possible recommendation! (AU)
(SPHC)

THIS MEANS WAR! – "Use it Up" flexi

Belgian / Dutch band, THIS MEANS WAR! has released a single-sided, screen-printed, one-song flexi, featuring a previously released track from a 10" from last year. Why? No, I'm asking you. Please tell me. Fast-paced, burly guy punk with gruff vocals that ends with a mid-tempo, gang vocal titular chorus. If you like this, you should probably just get their other record so that you can hear more songs by them on a format that isn't useless. (GH)
(Pirate's Press)

TIM AND THE BOYS - "Growing" LP

Demented drum-machine driven punk from these bogans. I can't help but imagine them playing their sun-bleached cross between DEVO and PIL to a bowls club function room half-empty with bemused Sunday afternoon regulars. I really want to go to Sydney. Tons to choose from on this stacked platter, but "Plastic Curtains" and "Silent Room" are bona fide hits. And you have to love a song called "Gary Glitter's Eyes." Great stuff. (AM)
(Meatspin)

TRASH STREET – "Live At The BBQ Laundromat" CD

This is a '60s-style garage band from Minnesota. This is decent, as it reminds me of the early ROLLING STONES and at times has the trashy vibe of early JOHNNY THUNDERS. They do avoid the annoying fashion statement of the '60s retro scene, which is a plus for me. (RL)
(self-released)

TROUBLE BOYS – "My Own Way" / "Rock & Roll Is Dead"

Killer rock'n'roll punk two-sider outta Austin! Something about this one floats above what's become a mostly tired and formulaic garage punk sound. B-Side "Rock & Roll Is Dead" wins, convincingly capturing that '70s DEAD BOYS / JOHNNY THUNDERS swagger with scorching leads, and the A-side is a more uptempo pisstake. Will be interesting to see if they can keep it up from here or fizzle like the best of 'em. (GB)
(Sweetheart)

THE VACANT LOT – "The Ark" LP

Whoa! I've been ever curious about this mysterious Australian 1970s punk band, with one impossible to obtain "Living Underground" EP circa 1981 on the famed Doublethink label. One of those secret records the Aussie locals have been holding over our stateside heads for decades. Well, it seems this Damn You, Records label decided to do the detective work, and now we've got a whole LP to show for it. It seems there was enough interest back in 2009 that four of the five surviving members reunited for some shows, wrote a slew of new songs, and did a mini-tour of Australia. I was expecting a reissue here, but this is a (gasp) full LP of new material (although they reprise "She's Really Dead" from the OG EP). Usually those words are the kiss of death, but what the fuck, this is a killer DIY punk LP! Somehow they mysteriously capture that canned '80s studio sound; that added to the nonchalant geezer vocal delivery somehow all works for a great punk album in 2018. You get flashes of Devoto-era BUZZCOCKS here interspersed with diminutive lo-fi basement pop a la TELEVISION PERSONALITIES or WIRE. Seriously great LP here worth your investigation. (GB)
(Damn You)

VÉRTIGO – "Vínculos" LP

So you know how there are some aspects of SCREECHING WEASEL that are really intriguing and fun? But then there's all this other stuff about the band that almost makes them unlistenable now? VÉRTIGO, from Barcelona, was able pick out just the awesome parts of Screeching Weasel and combine it with the intense songwriting approach of GENERACION SUICIDA. And together, they make one hell of a great mosh-pop album. Fun, but not goofy. Poppy, but with no sugar. This is the kind of band that reminds you to pogo when you're feeling it. This is great. (FS)
(De o Fora!)

MARKUZ WALACH – "Identity" CD

This is awfully slick for a one-man band. It reminds me of those modern country pop bands that inhabit late night talk shows and SNL. However, this is more charming that any of those. MARKUZ WALACH has a wandering troubadour feel. He was homeless for a while, though not anymore. The songs have a feeling of the open road with a hint of new-age-y-ness in the lyrics. (CK)
(Zygmatron)

WASTED LIVES – "Wirehead" EP

Deep-dive into this lesser-known Canadian band, circa '79. That whole Quintessence / "Vancouver Complication" sound is smeared across this thing: very capably-played classic punk, clinging hooks, clarity with a sneer. Oddly "pro," all things considered, but still hard to imagine any "Smash The State" fan thumbing their nose at these sounds. Contains a nifty booklet with all manner of biographical

details...Ya know, for the nerds! Worth a look, either for nostalgia or for brand new kicks. (MC)
(Supreme Echo)

WAVELESS – "As One More Folded Paper Crane" 12"

Sad midwestern music at the intersection of indie rock, goth, and shoegaze. If you're into that collision (think FOR AGAINST or MY DAD IS DEAD or BROKEN WATER), this may be your record. Distant and fragile guitar lines over more propulsive rhythms, drumming that's complex and dynamic (dare I say a little jazzy?!) without coming off as over-competent or distracting, which is especially nice on slow cruiser tracks like "9 Ghosts of You." The songs here are plaintive and subtle without being boring, which is certainly a danger with this kind of music. There's always some new melody taking hold, some weird flourish in instrumentation or flutter in the percussion to catch your notice. Overall, it sounds like driving through a snowstorm, a pretty and a little unsteadying experience that has its time and place, even if it's not supposed to be fun. (EW)
(Moniker)

WITCHTRIAL – "Demo 2017" 12"

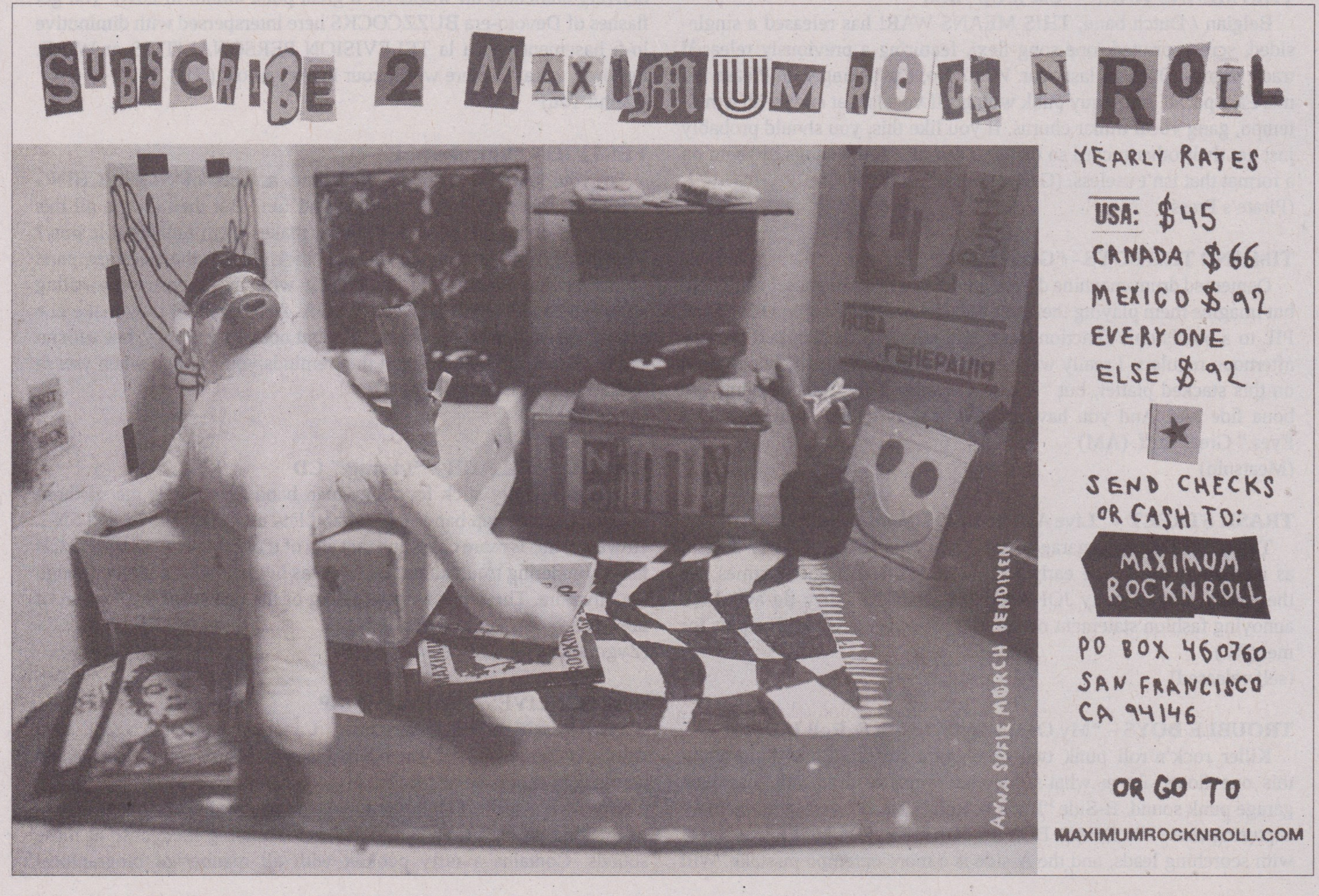
Ah, *another* sold-out demo cassette freshly pressed to wax, this time from DC's metalpunks WITCHTRIAL. Comprised of members of other DC bands such as RED DEATH, the material here is clearly inspired by early metal greats but is interpreted in a modern lense in the same way as bands like MIDNIGHT or BAT. This ain't no flaccid rehash of metal's glorious past though—the way the band combines elements of speed metal, thrash, and traditional metal with hardcore, while not reinventing the wheel, is unique enough to warrant repeated listens. Highlights include the drastic shift from more ADX or EXCITER inspired speedy riffs to more traditional JUDAS PRIEST riffing in "Hammer of the Hearse" as well as the switch from CANDLEMASS doom riffing to technical thrash madness to *Show No Mercy*-era SLAYER maliciousness in "Speak To Evil." The vocalist deserves kudos as well for their mastery of their range, which goes from Tom Araya highs to a clear death growl. All in all, an exciting release that could serve as a gateway into metal for many punks. (JD)
(Beach Impediment)

WOLVES OF THE DRY RAVINE – "Play With Matches (Near The Powder Keg)" LP

Straight forward, competent, pretty boring take on punk. The vocals, no matter how strained they get, never change tone, and that is a bummer for me. (DZ)
(Stepdads)

THE WRETCHED SIGHTS – "Heathen Help Us" EP

Hard hitting and uncompromising Midwestern hardcore punk in the fine tradition of Motor City, this is working class meat and potatoes hardcore with as much introspection as virulence—and I have a feeling that a full length from these kids (OK, adults) might be even better. Bonus nods for the Bug on the back cover—intentional or not, it's appreciated. (WN)
(self-released)



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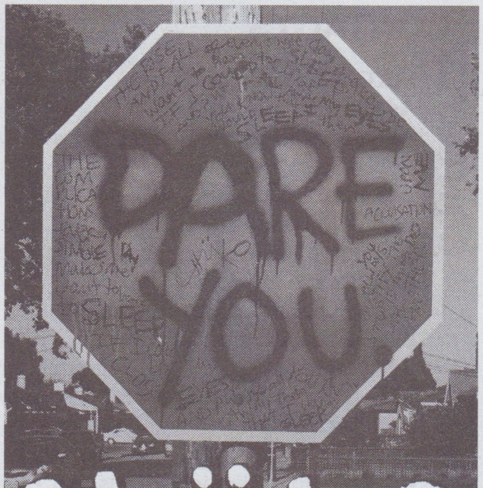

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DEMOS

All cassettes and CD-Rs are reviewed in this section. Send yours to PO Box 460760, San Francisco, CA 94146 USA and include your contact information. Submissions without artwork will not be considered.

(AT) Alex Turner
(GH) Greg Harvester
(HB) Heather Blotto
(JR) Jason Ryan
(MA) Matt Badenhop
(MR) Matt Reynolds
(RS) Ramy Silyan

ARALKUM – *Demo 2016* – Perhaps only a coincidence, but much of the Czech Republic-born hardcore punk I've been reviewing as of late starts out with chord progressions that sound more traditionally like "outros." Like, the overall structure of the recording is laid in reverse. That includes this ARALKUM tape from 2016. Vocals go from harsh screaming to spoken word. Lyrics are overtly poetic with political undertones. Music is melodic, then aggressive passages are played overtly fast. The sort of *oomph* it needed to stand out. (JR) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, aralkum.bandcamp.com)

BAD IDEA – Unabashed and largely formulaic rockin' bar punk that occasionally dabbles in OBLIVIANS thump and *STP Not LSD* absurdity, BAD IDEA mostly hovers around Epitaph Records-era HUMPERS. The tape cover, which features a woman's legs in fishnets and her hands on a pistol, seems like it's either a rip of an old NRA ad or an homage to the artwork of SOCIAL DISTORTION's self-titled LP. In actuality, the woman on the cover is a character who features prominently in at least two of the tape's songs, a sort of manic pixie dream girl for the over 40 set: a hard drinking, concealed carrying enigma who won't take any shit and who may (or may not) be a parole officer. Kind of like the HUMPERS, BAD IDEA is a little out of touch. Being out of touch can be charming, but I found this tape frustrating. There's some truly excellent L.A.-style gunk punk to be found here—both "Gone" and "Secret Mission" come off gloriously, like the back end of a bender, and are, like, 95% perfect songs. But BAD IDEA rarely goes more than a few minutes without doing something that I think sucks, like using some blech chord progression in the first song, or titling the fifth song "Dangerous Dame," or playing a guitar solo that is both aesthetically and technically not quite there, or repeatedly using the word "bitch" as a lyric. It's too much. Making a tape that's a modest facsimile of the HUMPERS' *Live Fast or Die Trying* is fine, I guess, but I wish BAD IDEA had aimed higher than that, like at least for the HUMPERS' *My Machine* or something. (MR) (11-song cassette, lyrics not included, facebook.com/bad.idea.punk)

BLOOD LOSS – Totally fucking energetic and chaotic hardcore from Denver that does not let up from beginning to end. There are some parts about this that remind me of *Dirty Rotten EP*-era DRI, but it's also just really lo-fi and insane. Their vocalist is screaming shit about sunburns and trying to simply stay alive in this fucked up world while the rest of the band is going the fuck off. Excellent. (GH) (5-song cassette, lyrics included, bloodloss.bandcamp.com)

CONSTANT INSULT – The newest tape from Minneapolis pile-drivers (and their last with human drum wizard Matt Stagner) still proves that this band is doing no wrong whatsoever. Super tight musicianship is paired with catchy harmonies for days and a two guitar attack that does the best job of feeding off of each other without being too showy. The bass locks in with the drums in a way that gives off a faint MASSHYSTERI vibe. Yet another perfect release by these folks and a new batch of songs to get stuck in your head for another year. (GH) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, constantinsult.bandcamp.com)

DAYTIME DRUGS – *Space Station Blues* – Six dirty, rabid, blues-influenced tracks that incorporate unusual elements like avant-garde piano mashing and unintentional mic feedback. The songs are about being stuck in outer space, mummies, and the like. They have a track about being a "hungry Eskimo," suggesting these guys either don't know that's a slur or don't care. Despite this, there is something I do appreciate about a nearly unlistenable trash-punk song that sounds like it was recorded on three separate handheld tape recorders talking shit on how useless Beethoven is. (HB) (6-song CD-R, lyrics not included, daytimedrugs.bandcamp.com)

EVENING STANDARDS – Goddamn, this shit is good! Chris and Daun have been perfecting their style together and apart for years in bands like VERA MALETA, PURPLE 7, LANDLORD, and the DOOR KEYS. They join forces again for EVENING STANDARDS, and every song on here sounds confident, catchy and desperate, including X-style harmonies and transitions that would sound so good blasting out of a car with the windows down in the middle of nowhere. Mid-tempo goodness here that immediately feels like an instant classic with the drums held down by the same person who kept you bopping in FUTURE VIRGINS and ADD/C. Yeah, you should track this down. (GH) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, basementpop.bandcamp.com)

GECKO – *Enter The...* – Denver fuckos GECKO deliver five songs of mutated hardcore that rips firmly through a mid-tempo stomp and is led by a deranged singer spitting bile until his head sounds like it is falling off. Definitely has some GAG vibes happening, but this shit does not disappoint. (GH) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, enterthegecko.bandcamp.com)

GIANT HAYSTACKS – *This is All There Is* – GIANT HAYSTACKS was a Bay Area band that broke up over ten years ago, and I still feel their absence in the local punk scene today. This tape is a collection of their many EPs along with some odds and ends, and it is just as perfect and essential as any of their long-players. I wouldn't want to break tradition with every other review this band ever got, so I will say that their sound is easily informed by the MINUTEMEN, WIRE, and GANG OF FOUR, but they used that framework to make their own thing that left a real lasting mark in the Bay. The players in this band locked together in a way that feels really special. A guitar playing chords that might be made up, a bass that is trying to use just about every fret on every song and rock-solid drumming that isn't afraid to go out on some limbs. The lyrics muck

about with an air of self-deprecation that belies their very real determination and seriousness. I can't get enough of every song on here...It's the kind of stuff you already want to hear again before the song is even over. The tape comes with a zine full of photos, stories, context and a list of every show the band ever played, which is so cool. You're not gonna order this, but you really should because you're probably a person who likes good things and this is one of those good things. (GH) (19-song cassette, lyrics not included, gianthaystacks.bandcamp.com)

HALF PAGAN – *Lamentations* – Simple, melodic guitar chord progressions and straightforward rock beats back up the singer's romantic and unselfconsciously shaky voice. The whole recording has a folky vibe, not the hipster kind of folk, but more like a rock'n'roll Sunday school teacher type of folk. There is quite a bit of educational lyrical content about history, ocular anatomy, and Laika the cosmonaut dog. The songs are mostly gentle and silly, which seems appropriate for people who might actually be fully pagan. (HB) (12-song CD-R, lyrics not included, halfpagan.com)

HOT TIP – *Demo 2017* – HOT TIP released its first demo in 2014 and an LP in 2016. Both are better than this tape. The 2014 demo was wild and the 2016 LP was slick, but here we get mostly yelped vocals and repetitive riffs that are neither particularly interesting nor particularly groovy. Much of the tape skirts around the very outskirts of punk, and, like late '90s SONIC YOUTH, which is not an inapt comparison, the music comes off as more fun to play than to actually listen to. Don't get me wrong, there're a couple of true rippers here. For instance, the song "LLC," with its menace and purpose, is much more than just a cool song title. That said, this tape isn't the best starting place for this band. (MR) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, drugparty.bandcamp.com)

IMPOSITION MAN – Moody drum-machine punk from a couple nice Austrian guys living in different cities. Evoking the rhythms and melody-sense of KILLING JOKE, they're armed with guitars and synths, as well as overdriven and grinding bass. The vocals are hollered in a near-indistinguishable but rhythmic manner. Most of the tracks seem to strike an interesting balance between being both forceful and dreamy, which may sound contradictory, but is what I think makes this project rise to the top. (MA) (8-song cassette, some lyrics included, impositionman.bandcamp.com)

ISOLATION PARTY – *Mr. Telephone / ISO EP* – So the EP was limited to 28 copies and Mr. Telephone is a two-song mp3-only teaser for an upcoming LP. I didn't know anything about this London, Ontario solo project turned real band, but I'm in. Post-punk in the style of power pop / garage. Reminds me of the EXPLODING HEARTS at times and the NUMBER ONES. The LP should be killer, hopefully with a wild ass basement tour. (AT) (6-song cassette, lyrics not included, isolationparty.bandcamp.com)

LAWMAN – *On Patrol* – This is gonna sound like I'm talking shit, but I'm being real here. LAWMAN sounds like sped up ZZ TOP and SUPERSUCKERS (OK...and maybe AGNOSTIC FRONT) riffs with hardcore sensibilities fronted by a singer that is a cross between a rabid bulldog and late '80s GG ALLIN. I wish there were any information with this tape because this is a difficult title and band name to search. (GH) (8-song tape, lyrics not included)

LIFE STINKS – *They Say It's Exceptional In America* – French release collecting this Oakland band's three singles on Total Punk and their *Under My Thumb* tour cassette from 2016. They've broken up, and this is an easy way to grab all the singles in one spot. A mix of KEITH MORRIS-era BLACK FLAG and IGGY POP. (AT) (12-song cassette, lyrics included, coolmarriage.bigcartel.com)

LOW EBB – The first track is mid-tempo and disgusting, suggesting some lineage back to RUDIMENTARY PENI, but with much more of a hardcore sound. The first track is the golden hour of endless breakdown, which then fades into a dusk of ripping hardcore fury. The slow parts are the most interesting, with vocals and riffs that don't do what you'd expect—turning, twisting, and stopping at the wrong times—and to be fair, most of the tape is pretty slow. Song titles including "I Hate Cake" and "Pictures of Sunsets" invoke casual nihilism that fits perfectly with the vocalist's depraved growling. (HB) (5-song cassette, lyrics not included, kidsofthelughole.bandcamp.com)

MIDNIGHT MINES – *Invisible Insurrection of A Million Minds* – Four songs and 35 minutes recorded live at a cafe in London, nothing quick or fast going on here. Lots of eerie and atmospheric soundscapes. The BODY's nosier music comes to mind, but instead of coming at from a metal angle, MIDNIGHT MINES seem like their depraved misery comes from an ambient / indie perspective. Perfect for long night walks in the rain with a bottle of whiskey and your own dark thoughts pacing through the streets. (AT) (4-song cassette, lyrics not included, midnightmines.bandcamp.com)

MYSTERY GIRL – *I Love Kissing b/w Shattered Dreams* – '70s style power pop that's not true grit like the REAL KIDS, but more sticky sweet like the TWINKEYZ. BABY SHAKES might be a decent modern comparison, although less on point. Notwithstanding the band name, there's a guy (or perhaps guys) singing here. The two songs have a romantic and sometimes sexual vibe, particularly the first song, which is kind of cute and generally on the correct side of creepy (i.e. not creepy). The far out effects on the second song's vocals show that MYSTERY GIRL is going for more of a *now* '70s sound, rather than for a *then* '70s sound like that of, say, a band like RAZZ. Both newbies and seasoned vets will be able to predict where these songs are going, but they go there in a very pleasant way. Meets expectations. Also, good use of glockenspiel. (MR) (2-song cassette, lyrics not included, mysterygirl518.bandcamp.com)

NIGHT SHAPES – *Wake Up* – There is so much going on here, and it's delivered in such a way that at first listen you can completely miss it. It took me a couple of listens to comprehend what NIGHT SHAPES has created on tape. It very much grows and expands as you listen. There are a lot of repetitive sounds, at times coming from all the instruments, including the singer, that just lead you into a drone soundscape. Eventually the band breaks into a rhythm, and when they do it feels really good, like a release. I love how angular, toneful, and tasteful this release is. (RS) (10-song cassette, lyrics not included, nightshapes.com)

PRIMARY – This debut tape from the Bay Area's PRIMARY sounds confident and stellar. Not totally surprising, considering the bands that the members have been playing in for years. They are flirting with a post-punk and goth framework, but approach it (thankfully) much more aggressively with vocals that are pissed but tuneful. Each song obviously has a lot of thought and work put into it and it sounds so smooth that you might not notice the bitterness and hate in the lyrics until you read them. I saw this band at their first show and to see how much they've progressed in such a short time makes me excited to keep seeing them more in the future, Members of BUTANNA, SUPER UNISON, MYSTIC PRIESTESS and many more. (GH) (6-song cassette, lyrics included, primarypunx.bandcamp.com)

RAAMATTU – Rip-roaring-as-fuck thrash from Finland (members from VASTUSTA and MIETTIIN!). Blastbeat pacing definitely enters this into grind territory, though it maintains more hardcore characteristics than metal...let's say more like DROPDEAD.

A punishing listen, well worth your time. (MA) (8-song cassette, lyrics not included, bsrecords@gmx.com)

SCUMWORM – *Demo 2017* – With a romantic, operatic, and militant introduction, SCUMWORM quickly avalanche into gruesome grindcore and thrash, which simmers into sludgy grooves. This tape is all over the place but not in a bad way. Vocals remind me of CRETIN, and subtly AXIOM. Music reminds me of SLAYER, plus some industrious BRUTAL TRUTH effects. This is genuine grind that I do not believe is seeking an audience. Simply reeks. (JR) (12-song cassette, lyrics included, facebook.com/gusanoescoria)

SPECIAL MOVES – *January* – Self-described lo-fi DIY punk from Olympia, SPECIAL MOVES' tape is so rough around the edges that it's more of an impressionistic suggestion of some songs rather than any kind of clear representation of melodies or lyrics. There are only two songs on the tape, and the second one gets cut off before it ends. Even so, the songs are still powerful and sweet, and intermittently anthemic in a DIY pop punk sort of way. They're slow and heartfelt, with heavily distorted guitar that overpowers almost everything else, and buried vocals that are earnest and sincere if not exploding with charisma. The shitty recording quality tempts nostalgia—it feels like listening to a recording you made at band practice eleven years ago with friends you thought you couldn't live without, but who have since all died or changed so much you've irreparably drifted apart. (HB) (2-song cassette, lyrics included, reflectivetapes.bandcamp.com)

TIFFANI – *House on Fire or No House at All* – While many bands seem to be some sort of hyphenated punk, Minneapolis' TIFFANI is just straight up punk with a howling singer that is somewhere between XYLITOL and Frank Discussion of the FEEDERZ. Simple, raw, dirty, and direct, with a definite freak vibe throughout. I wish there was a lyric sheet. Good shit. (GH) (9-song cassette, lyrics not included, tiffani.bandcamp.com)

THE UNBORN – *Apoi!calypse* – Italian street punk with a bit of a metal guitar tone and shouted / gang vocals about classic horror films. Their sound isn't really breaking any new ground, and, personally, I think that aligning yourselves with skins and wearing potato sacks on your head in 2018 is a little...dodgy. (GH) (4-song cassette, lyrics included, skinhead.it)

VELVET BETHANY – *Forever Cool Double Nice* – Some of the tracks land on the twee end of indie, with a sound that would fit in on Slumberland. But there's more going on here, with a few of the songs veering into garage rock territory, like the earlier releases by the GOSSIP. "Forbidden Fruit" is the mix-tape track, with a super original vocal melody and cutting, treble-heavy guitar leads. (HB) (7-song cassette, lyrics not included, velvetbethany.bandcamp.com)

VIOLENCIA – *El Odio Me Hizo Hacerlo* – Hardcore in the powerviolence / fastcore vein from Tijuana. Seems like it's pretty by the books, but like many of the releases reviewed here I'd say it's recorded and presented as more of an EP than a demo. Out on (what I assume is their own) Speed Creamer Cassettes, I wonder if they were hoping for an official creamer stamp of approval, but I think our reviewer Robert Collins is the only one certified to bestow that credential. Recently interviewed in the "New Blood" section of our website, this would be perfect at a basement show with friends and plenty of cheap beer. (AT) (12-song cassette, lyrics included, violenciahc.bandcamp.com)

V/A – *Mutants 4 Nuclear Waste Vs GWTW* – This is a compilation tape focusing on a very specific scene in Kansas City, MO featuring bands like WARM BODIES, SYNTHETIX, MISS LADY, PETROLEUM and more, who all seem to share a few members. Besides WARM BODIES' style of hard-to-describe freak-out punk, most of the other bands on here delve into a world of synthesizer-based, '80s-style new wave that has been thrown in the trash and recycled twenty times over until has been mutated into a new beast altogether. Analog phone lines pop up from time to time along with wonky electronics that is mesmerizing, interesting and catchy. It closes out with a DEVO cover that weirdly ties everything together and makes just a little too much sense. Well worth your time. (GH) (12-song cassette, lyrics not included, gonewiththeweed.bandcamp.com)

V/A – *Punk Contra O Fascismo* – A nice anti-oppression / anti-inequality themed collection of some Spanish and Brazilian bands. Styles fit between mall punk, Oi!, ska, hardcore and '77 punk, all through a crispy digital production. The bands: LA PILA PUNK, ULTIMA CLASSE, THE CASTRO ZOMBIES & THE MUTANT PHLEGM, JOE, PATXANGOI!, GUERRA URBANA, JARREA!, ATOX, O LEOPARDO, and my personal fave, PESTE Y MIERDA. (MA) (20-song CD-R, lyrics not included, collectorseries@hotmail.com, zineefeitocolateral.wordpress.com)

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ZINES

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(JA) Joshua Kay
(JD) Joan DeToro
(MF) Miranda Fisher
(RH) Ryan Hertel
(YD) Evie Deller

BREAK THE CHAIN #2
$4 / 46 pgs
This zinester has the rare ability to get a consistently good interview out of everyone. There are four interviews from bands (Dawn Ray'd, Drugcharge, Night Loner, and Myakka) from four different places (UK, Raleigh, Austin, and Tallahassee respectively), and they all come out interesting and unique feeling. So many interviewers get into a rut of asking the same things over and over and getting the same answers from every band. In this instance, it's worth your time to read each one, both to be entertained and to know where to get some new tunes. In between the interviews are some awesome works of art. Matthew Jaffe provides some killer stippled drawings in drawn-in frames in a style reminiscent of mid-'90s MTV bumpers. Stacey Matchett provides some hectic, scratchboard drawings of elf-like humanoids that are fun as hell. This zinester obviously put in a lot of effort to make a great zine, and it shows in the super high quality throughout. (RH)
facebook.com/breakthechainzine / duvaldiykid@gmail.com

INFORMATION DOMINANCE #2
$1 / 40 pgs
There's a lot I enjoyed about this zine. Its creator, Jonah, clearly put a lot of thought into it, so beyond band interviews and photo spreads there's a political essay / book review about the alt-right, beer reviews, tiki drinks, interviews with "road dogs," and he even gets his dad to review some records. Those choices make this one stand out among a glut of more standard music zines. The major downside for me is that I would probably rather remove, cook, and eat my own eyeballs than listen to the metal and hardcore bands featured here, but if that's not a problem for you, check this one out—I don't know how l he's able to sell these for $1 post paid, but that's a steal for what you get here. (MF)
informationdominance.tumblr.com

NAILS FROM THE SKY #2
50p / 27 pgs
Cool mini zine out of London giving scene reports, reviews, and interviews from the London, UK queer punk scene! Colette narrates with their own slices of life, running around town running into friends, eating food, doing academic and DIY research about the history and future of public services and alternative organization structures, musing about throwing punk shows for children, going to picket lines, waiting in line for the hyped gig and then dipping cause whatever, you have to go home and work on your zine in your room if you wanna get it done in time for Bent Fest! I appreciate this kind of regular life zine assembled with a deadline, a practice that seems to have largely fallen by the wayside now that we're all watching each other's throwaway stories on our personal TVs everyday. Shoutout to everyone who's holding it down. Also gives a window on Brexit and what the wave of austerity and xenophobia is looking like in the UK via a drinking game... plus a charming interview with "south London's gayest moshers," Pink Grip. (AK)
Colette / 67 Paulet Road / Camberwell, London SE5 9HW UK / coletterosa@riseup.net

OUR FUTURE #4
£1.50 / 24 pgs
I feel kinda bad that I'm the person reviewing this zine, since it's so Discharge focused and, well, I don't really care about Discharge. Along with some archival Discharge material (an old interview, show flyers, etc.), there are interviews with a number of bands—but the interviews still center around Discharge. It's very nicely done, although I must note that some interviews are far more interesting than others; Deek Allan from Oi Polloi is definitely the highlight, while others could have used a bit more editing. No matter, I'm sure Dis-freaks love this thing, and there are plenty of them out there. (MF)
ourfuturerecords.bandcamp.com

PADDLE YOUR OWN CANOE #5
£2 / 58 pgs
It's probably unfair to compare most zinesters to *Cometbus*, since so many others have done similar zines, but I got a real *Cometbus* vibe off of this one. This issue is a tour diary from 2014 of the zinester flying over from the UK to travel with the Flex, Violent Reaction, and Obstruct to eight gigs in California and Nevada. I'm envious of the attention to detail paid and the specific memories that are included. I never remember what I had for breakfast the next day, but those seemingly insignificant details are what make this tour diary really pop off the page as both inanely human and yet totally memorable. It's a bummer that much of his San Francisco experience seemed to focus on how upsetting the city's homeless problem is and how one of the venue managers was a jackass, but that's a reality that locals may have become too complacent with. It's good to hear the homeless issue repeated over and over by visitors so we don't forget that it's happening. I was very amused by the story of seeing Under 15 Seconds, a band with a gimmick of playing songs of that length with funny intros that are much longer, as I had a similar amusement upon seeing them the first time. You get a lot of bang for your buck (ground for your pound? Because the U.K...sorry...) with this zine, so it's a great read for a comfy chair and a big beverage. (RH)
paddleyourowncanoe.bigcartel.com / daveyghc@yahoo.co.uk

PARANOIZE #44
$2 or Free in New Orleans / 36 pgs
This is something I wish I'd known about before heading to New Orleans last year. "The New Orleans Scene Report" includes a list of local bands, venues, and record stores that would have all been great to

know about. Aside from the NOLA punk / metal tourist support, this issue also contains two quite lengthy and detailed interviews with back at it again NOLA local legend thrashers Exhorder, and reunited Texas hardcore punks Dead Horse. The first interview with Exhorder provides a good balance of the band's history and what to expect from their new era, and you may or may not learn what the hell "groove metal" is. The Dead Horse interview is not as long and detailed, but you still manage to get a pretty good overview of their beginnings and their most recent work up until their announcement that they're breaking up again. This is a fun and worthwhile zine to check out regardless but especially if you have any specific interest in New Orleans. (RH)
paranoizenola.com / bobby@paranoizenola.com / Paranoize 'Zine, P.O. Box 2334, Marrero, LA 70073-2334

SPIKE ANARKIE'S REVENGE #1
Free or Trade / 16 pgs
A quick, killer, scrawled-yet-nearly-legible read from a punk, anarchist, and volunteer at Gilman. Even though this was, beyond a doubt, thought of and immediately written in pencil within the same hour, it's not complete garbage! Thoughts on dealing with libertarians disguised as free thinkers, dealing with bro-style hardcore disguised as punk at Gilman, an insight as to what local punk legends will exchange for already free coffee, and even ponderings on that fucking odor around Gilman. Make the next issue just a pinch more legible, and you've got a fan here. Don't stop writing this, Otto! (DZ)
Otto / 924 Gilman St / Berkeley, CA 94710 / ott68374@gmail.com

THE STOWAWAYS #17
$2-3 / 20 pgs
Pretty tight little read after the author took a few years off to join the Peace Corps in Colombia. Interviews with the band Post Life, trippy psych-core guitar wizard Calvin Jalandoni, and a few pages of live show reviews. I think I expected a bit more after a four year absence; tell me some wild as hell story of your weird ass time in the fucking Peace Corps. It was a good read, though. (DZ)
960 E. Bonita Ave. Unit #120 / Pomona, CA. 91767

TOINEN VAIHTOEHTO #280
3.34 € /32 pages
In Finnish. Interviews with Fliehende Sturme, Anaeroba, Generation Decline, Judas Chair Collective, and Runopopjat Heikki Ja Tapio. Record and live reviews also. Looks nice and seems to have a good attitude from what I can tell. (JA)
PO BOX 25, 37501 LEMPÄÄLÄ, FINLAND / tv@punkinfinland.net

TOLEDO PONKEROS #2
$1 / 20 pgs
I have kinda been waiting for issue two to come out for a while, as the last one was simple, punk as fuck, a little drunk, and pretty heartfelt without being (too) ridiculous. This issue, like the first, focuses on Toledo stuff (duh!) with an interview and pull out poster of Rat Kids, photos of punxers at house shows holding up the walls and keeping the porch warm, and reviews of a few choice Bogota punk releases. A killer little read that makes me think I'd like to hang with the twerps that make this. Yeah, there's not really much to it, I'm just glad that I read it. (DZ)
2040 Alvin St. / Toledo, OH 43607

TRANSCAT #1
$5 / 36 pgs
Transcat is set at an anime convention in the early-mid 2000s, starring an effeminate high school *otaku* (anime nerd) who finds a magical cat hat that turns him into a cool girl with super powers! She uses her powers to fight perverts and creeps in the anime scene, breaks their shit, teaches everyone some should-be-obvious lessons about consent, and even lands an admiring kiss from a hot cosplayer in an elevator. I would have been obsessed with this when I was a bisexual teenage anime freak. I think this came out pretty recently, but it feels like a relic from the turn of the century. The anime subculture miraculously continues to exist outside of time, unswayed by passing trends or follies, content to thrive within its own secret world. Moral of the story: cool girls have each others' backs. (AK)
transcatcomics.blogspot.com

TRANS HEALTH SCIENCE & YOU: HOW RESEARCH AFFECTS OUR LIVES
26 pgs
Informative zine written by two people based in Wisconsin about the emergence of trans health science, which stands in direct contrast to the ways that the medical industry acts as gatekeepers to transgender individuals, preventing them from receiving the care that they need. The authors are incisive when it comes to issues they have with the medical establishment, in particular the American Psychological Association and their publication, the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (otherwise known as the *DSM*). The *DSM* has a history of pathologizing the trans experience—literally, transsexualism was included in the *DSM*-III—and pressuring transgender individuals into fitting a binarist model if they wish to receive any gender-affirming treatment. The authors of this zine seek to combat this by encouraging transgender people to take the reins of research about trans issues by encouraging literacy and participation in said research. They include guides to reading academic works, guidelines for which studies to participate in, and how to look up previous studies about transgender people. Rounding out the zine is artwork by transgender people. Cisgender people will have little to no use for this zine, but transgender people, who are so frequently put through bullshit by the medical industry and by TERFs, could use this repeatedly. (JD)
facebook.com/nonbinaryco / nonb.zine@gmail.com

VIDEO PROTOZOA #2
$3 / 36 pgs
The second installment of *Video Protozoa* features interviews with some of the best bands around: Warm Bodies, Rik and the Pigs, Patsy, Blank Spell, Acrylics, and Behavior. (And non-band-wise, I was happy to read the interview with Victor from Austin's I HATE I SKATE label—dude's doing great things and I'm glad people outside of Austin are paying attention to that.) But what really sets this zine apart is the element of the hand-drawn. The introduction is hand-lettered and there's a great two-page comic / show recollection in the middle. It's things like these that make this feel so special, and I hope to see more of that in future issues, which I'll definitely obtain. (MF)
videoprotozoa.bigcartel.com

WINTERVIEW #3
2.5 € / 72 pages
Interviews with Σκοτοδίνη, Zero, Nature Boys, Jonathan Sirit (Belgrado), Lifewreck / Dirty Wombs 2014 Euro tour report, a K-Town Hardcore Fest 2016 report and a Greek punk discography. Pretty good. The Sirit interview is centered on their design work (cool punk update on constructivism). This zine has a nice way of interweaving life / politics / real world punk in a non-forced way. The interviews flow in that direction naturally, the tour diary was more readable than most, and even the fest report felt more worthwhile. Winterview seems like a pretty good entry point for the non-Greek or Greek punk to step into and find out about stuff. (JA)
winterviewpunk@gmail.com

SCENIC

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CHARGED GBH
PIÑATA PROTEST / DRUNKEN RAMPAGE / THE MINUTES
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THE CREEPSHOW
SAMMY KAY / THE JUKEBOX ROMANTICS
JUNE 21 @ THE SAFARI ROOM AT EL CORTEZ

THE FAD / JOYSTICK
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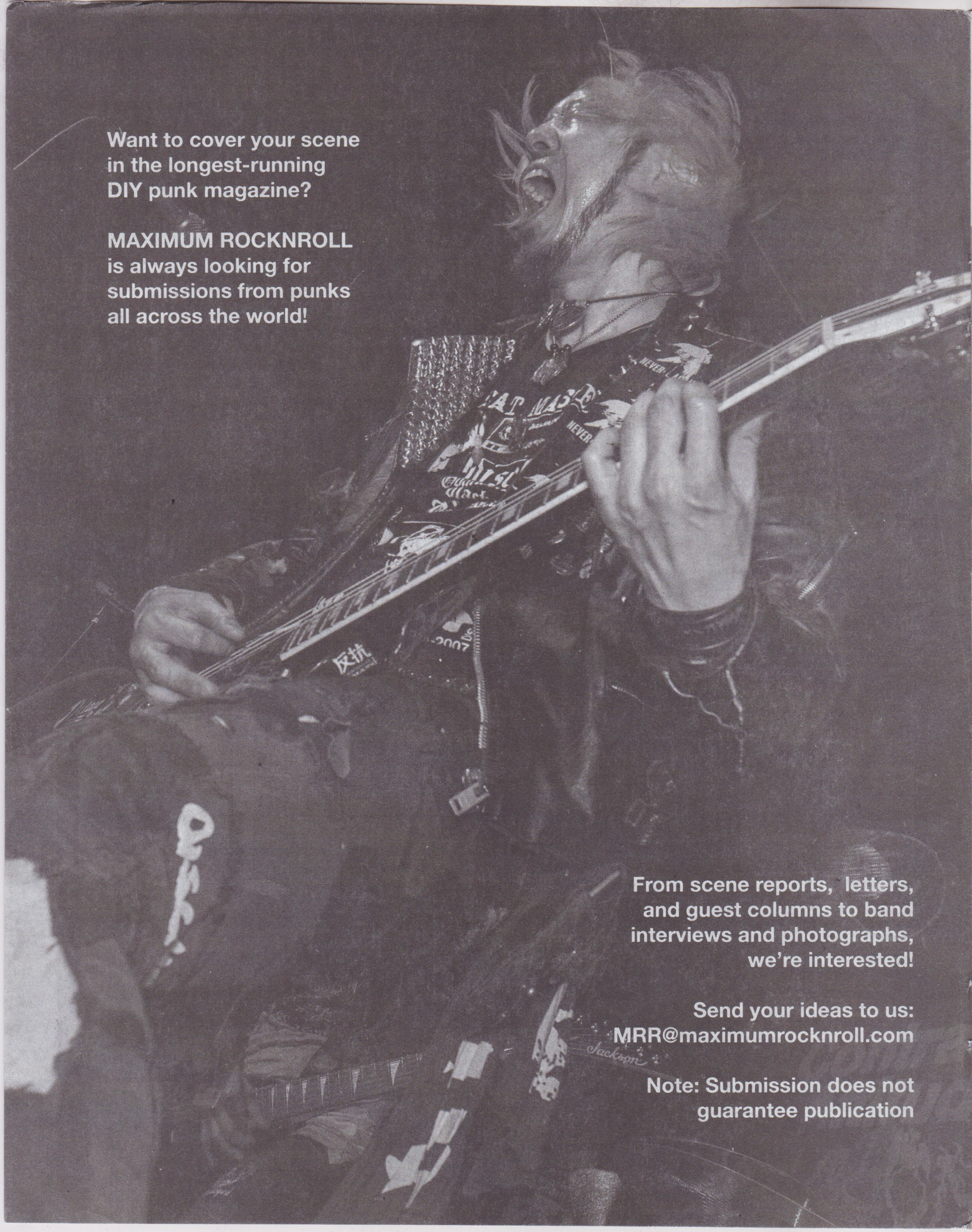
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